DELMORE,

OR

MODERN FRIENDSHIP.

VOL. III.

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DELMORE,

OR

MODERN FRIENDSHIP.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MRS. ROBERTS.

———— "There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face; —
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust."

SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. III.

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DELMORE,

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CHAPTER I.

LORD Henry Delmore was involuntarily doomed, in the absence of his brother, to attend to the necessary arrangements concerning his father's affairs.

He occasionally visited his gallant friend Major Belford, whose generous mind and exalted [illegible]ents were cal-

culated to re-excite his dormant energies.

The society of Mrs. Lascelles and her charming daughter constituted his greatest solace: in the polished conversation of the mother, his intellect was exercised and refined without being fatigued; and the interesting gentleness and attractive graces of Maria, calmed his agitated spirits, and soothed the corrosions of his afflicted bosom.

Every time he beheld Maria Lascelles, some new beauty was presented to his enraptured fancy, — some engaging quality was hourly displayed to his ravished view. The sensibility of her heart, the purity and benevolence of her sentiments, and the engaging loveliness of her person, exalted her in his estimation to the pinnacle of [illegible] excellence; — and while he co[illegible]lated her numerous

perfections and exquisite beauties, his bosom glowed with the fervour of an ardent passion.

Respect and affection, however, prompted him to join his afflicted relatives; but he would have departed from Melrose Castle with no inconsiderable reluctance, if the declaration that Mrs. Lascelles had made of her intention to reside at Mr. Arnold's cottage until her husband arrived in England, had not darted a gleam of sunshine to revive his desponding spirits. The anticipated delight of enjoying the frequent society of her amiable daughter, amidst the tranquil scenes of rural seclusion, inspired his breast with thrilling ecstacy. Every repugnance to leave town was now removed; and he impatiently hastened to Melrose Castle.

The meeting at Melrose was impressive and affecting. Every eye seemed

to speak the anguish of the heart; while the trembling tear manifested the sympathizing sorrow that oppressed each bosom.

Delmore's resemblance of his father momentarily increased the perturbation, and revived the distress of the Marchioness of Melrose, by forc[illegible] recalling to her mind the image o[illegible] beloved and affectionate husban[illegible]: his respectful attentions speedily tran[illegible]quillized her agitations; and hi[illegible] affectionate solicitude and filial tenderness soothed her disturbed spirits. His constant exertions and unremitting endeavours were incessantly a[illegible]d successfully employed to re-animate her desponding mind, and to reconcile her to an irrevocable infliction.

By the absence and indisposition of his brother, the settlement of his father's affai[illegible] [illegible]ved on him: and as Delmore [illegible] [illegible]ompelled to make

arrangements with different persons, and to direct his attention to a multiplicity of objects, he was occasionally constrained to arouse from the morbid lethargy of woe: and exert the energies of his vigorous intellect.

The elevation of Lord Arlington to his father's honours, occasioned a vacancy in the representation for the Borough of ——.

Ever attentive to the advancement and welfare of his friend, Lord Henry resolved to exert his interest to obtain a seat in the House of Commons for Mansell.

Delmore immediately dispatched a letter to Mansell, acquainting him with his wish, that he should succeed the present Marquis of Melrose, as one of the members for the Borough of ——; and [illegible]ing him, in-

the strongest terms, to return to England in sufficient time to offer himself as a candidate at the approaching election.

Mansell had long been rioting in every excess of indulgence that a voluptuous and luxurious city could supply. Enraptured with the possession of the beautiful Miss Byron, he revelled in every pleasure, and gratified his vanity by constantly exhibiting his lovely Charlotte at every place of public amusement.

He had artfully, but ineffectually, endeavoured to induce Miss Byron, to dispense with the marriage ceremony: — he painted in glowing colours the ecstatic bliss, which two fond hearts would mutually experience in a union where love constituted the only tie, — where honour formed the basis. Yet, though Miss

Byron's mind had been slightly infected by the pestiferous doctrines of modern philosophy,—though the susceptibility of her heart had betrayed her into an indiscreet elopement,—her bosom was the seat of unsullied purity; and she started even at the thought of a connection repugnant to virtuous affection, and recoiled with horror at the suggestion of an intercourse unsanctioned by divine or human institutions.

Mansell affected, on perceiving her abhorrence of his proposal, to treat it as the mere effervescence of a heated imagination, too powerfully impressed with love and adoration, to observe the tedious formalities of a religious ceremony.

As he was only known to Miss Byron by the feigned name of Granville, he experienced little reluctance to sub-

mit to any form, as he was too well convinced, that a marriage solemnized in a foreign country, under such circumstances, could be at any time disavowed. Encouraged by this consideration, he resolved not to postpone the gratification of his passions by any conscientious scruples.

Two months had scarcely rolled away, since he had sworn, in the temple of the God of Nature, to love and cherish the innocent and unsuspecting victim of his protestations, when the natural inconstancy of his disposition resumed its wonted influence; and he regarded Miss Byron with the most composed indifference. Palled by enjoyment, he awoke from the delirium of joy: — the intoxication of the senses having subsided, ambition returned with augmented force; and Mansell now ruminated

on various stratagems to disengage himself from a being, who was neither subservient to his interest, nor instrumental to his pleasures.

Lord Henry Delmore's letter increased his impatience, and confirmed his resolution, to return to England.

Miss Byron had now ceased to interest his heart. An helpless, unprotected female possessed no power over a selfish, unfeeling bosom: —love was extinct; — ambition reigned; — she was not only indifferent and burthensome, — but she was an impediment to his aspiring views of opening aggrandisement;— and she might oppose herself as an obstacle to his union with Lady Georgina Delmore.

Such important considerations, the least of which would have decided his conduct, determined him to abandon one who no longer contributed to

his enjoyments, nor gratified his vanity;—whose presence might arrest or blast his ambitious projects.

Mansell had intended to have departed secretly without hinting at his meditated separation: — he had written a letter inclosing one hundred pounds; which his valet was to have delivered to Miss Byron after his departure; and the man, after fulfilling his instructions, was to have proceeded to rejoin his master.

An unexpected event however compelled him to change his intention. Miss Byron had, from her window, beheld her brother: she impatiently desired Mansell to hasten after him.

Mansell was greatly disconcerted: he pretended to comply with her wishes; —and after a short absence, returned with a countenance expressive of well feigned sorrow, declaring,

that he apprehended Mr. Byron must have entered some house, as he could not overtake him.

Perceiving that his fair companion was restless and disappointed, he requested her to tranquillize her spirits, assuring her that he would devote the evening to discover her brother's residence.

As young Byron was dressed in the naval uniform of Great Britain, Mansell readily discovered the hotel where he lodged; — and was not a little delighted to hear that he had left Milan that evening on an excursion into the country, from whence he would not return for a fortnight.

The absence of Lieutenant Byron, enabled Mansell to make arrangements more consistent with his personal safety. Had he deserted Charlotte Byron according to his original plan, he would have exposed himself to the

vengeance of an offended brother, who might have pursued him to England, and washed away the disgrace of his family in the blood of the violator of his sister's honour. If they met, Charlotte Byron would have specified the church where the nuptials were solemnized; and when her brother was convinced that she had not transgressed the laws of virtue, however he might lament the fatal infatuation that had induced so imprudent a step, he would compassionate her credulity; and his indignation would be directed with redoubled violence against her abandoned seducer.

Mansell hoped that if he could devise some means to prevent their meeting, he might be enabled to transmit such accounts of her licentiousness and degeneracy to her brother and her aunt, that they would be inclined to discard her, as a disgrace to their fa-

mily; and even endeavour to banish her from their recollection.

Yet still he was greatly perplexed by what means to accomplish this purpose: he was impatient to leave Milan; the opening prospects of ambition and aggrandisement that presented themselves, inflamed his eagerness to depart for England. He formed innumerable plans, and as quickly abandoned them. Bewildered and confused, he applied to his favourite valet, the confidential agent of his pleasures; who had been serviceable on former occasions; whose dexterity and address had often extricated him from similar embarrassments.

This fellow, who was an Italian, possessed the usual shrewdness and cunning of his countrymen; — he desired his master to banish all anxiety and concern; and engaged, for a stipulated reward, to procure a person

who would undertake to prevent Miss Byron from ever troubling his repose.

The wily Italian had a brother, whose house was situated near an extensive forest on the borders of Switzerland: — this fellow undertook, by his brother's persuasions, to confine Miss Byron in this sequestered spot; on condition that Mansell would allow him during his life an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds.

Mansell acceded to his terms. The man engaged to treat Miss Byron with gentleness and kindness, if she submitted peaceably to her confinement; but if she endeavoured to effect her escape, he promised that he would prevent her elopement, even by the sacrifice of her existence.

The artful valet then suggested, that his master should introduce his brother to Miss Byron as a country-

gentleman, who lived on his estate a short distance from Milan.

The lovely victim of their nefarious machinations received her husband's friend with her accustomed affability and sweetness. This accomplice in villainy sustained his part with infinite address. Mansell informed his beautiful companion, that his friend had insisted on their passing a few days at his rural retreat.

On the morning appointed for their departure, Mansell gaily remarked to his pretended friend, that he should place his wife under his protection, as he intended to proceed to his seat on horseback, in company with one of his countrymen.

Charlotte Byron regretted this arrangement; but the natural sweetness of her disposition prevented her from repining, much less from opposing his inclination:—she stepped into the car-

riage with the pretended country-gentleman, after entreating Mansell, with a look that might have softened a heart of stone, or mollified the most obdurate breast, to follow speedily; as, deprived of his society, the enchanting prospects of this picturesque country would lose their charms. The artless manner in which she uttered her endearing expressions, accompanied by such a bewitching smile of tenderness, pierced his marble heart; his callous breast, seared by selfish ambition, could scarcely resist the powerful energies of nature; and, had Charlotte Byron continued much longer in his presence, virtue would have been triumphant; — Mansell would have relented!

The rapid motion of the vehicle soon removed her from his sight; — her influence vanished; — ambition exclusively possessed his soul; — and

barred up every passage to commiseration or remorse.

Mansell determined to leave Milan without farther delay; — pretending to have received some intelligence that required his immediate presence in England, he informed the master of the hotel, that he must depart in the evening: and directed his servant to prepare his baggage. Nannette was ordered to pack up her mistress's clothes: the artful valet informed her, that, as the road passed by the seat of the gentleman at whose house she was now on a visit, they would stop at his residence.

After an early repast, at which Mansell swallowed two bottles of burgundy, to dispel the horrors of reflection, and dissipate the gloomy terrors of retrospection; — he quitted the scene of former delight with a feverish frame and an aching heart!

During his journey, he was distracted by the most heart-rending reflections: — compelled to listen to the suggestions of conscience, the atrocity of his conduct presented itself to his distempered imagination in all its odious deformity; and he reclined his head against the side of the carriage, writhing under the tortures of conscious guilt.

At the first post where they stopped to change horses, Mansell's valet (as had been previously concerted) pretended to proceed to the house of a neighbouring gentleman for his mistress: he speedily returned, and with well-feigned terror and affected sorrow in his looks, he falteringly informed his master, that his wife had eloped with a young French officer.

Mansell pretended to be deeply afflicted: he raved and execrated her baseness; — beat his forehead with his

hands; — inveighed against her infidelity;—exclaimed against her ingratitude:—and denounced eternal vengeance against the partner of her crime.

Poor Nannette was the easy dupe of their well-concerted duplicity:—she sobbed in all the bitterness of woe; and continued to lament the errors of her mistress.

Mansell had descended to this artifice, to remove Nannette's suspicions concerning Miss Byron's disappearance: and when the innocent girl returned to Paris, she would be the unintentional caluminator of her mistress.

One moment, overwhelmed with the torpidity of grief, and the next maddened by the frenzy of despair, Mansell pursued his route to Lyons. He felicitated himself on his arrival in that city, where he resolved to disencumber himself of Nannette; and relieve himself from the horrors of so-

litary reflection by admitting his valet into his carriage.

On the following morning, he dispatched Nannette, by the Diligence, to Paris; and desired her to proceed immediately to Miss Byron's relations; to whom, he was convinced, she would innocently communicate the foulest falsehood against the victim of his treachery.

Desirous of securing his own safety by alienating the affections of her relations, and anxious to blast her reputation, with fiend-like malignity, he addressed the following letter to her brother:

"SIR;

"A friend who respects your virtues, and is interested in your welfare, wishes to preserve your generous spirit from the wily artifices and delusive fascinations of a professed wanton. Your sister has been for

some time figuring at Milan, as the mistress of an English gentleman of the name of Granville: from whose protection she has eloped with a French officer. My soul revolts at this exertion of friendship: but it is necessary to harrow your feelings by this intelligence, to secure you from the disgraceful consequences of countenancing an impostor.

"AMICUS."

This letter was forwarded to Lieutenant Byron at Milan.

Lulled in imaginary security by the dastardly expedient of tarnishing the character of a lovely and unprotected female, the unrelenting murderer of innocence; the daring invader of virtue, hastened to swell his triumphs, and promote his selfish views, by the destruction of other victims.

CHAPTER II.

SOON after his arrival at Melrose Castle, Delmore called at Mr. Arnold's cottage. The benevolent old man was exulting in the promised pleasure of beholding his favourite Maria; and with joy sparkling in his eyes, and delight glowing on his cheek, he informed Lord Henry, that Mrs. Lascelles and her daughter would to-morrow again grace his humble dwelling.

Though Delmore was already acquainted with Mrs. Lascelles' intention of visiting this part of

the country, the intelligence that they were so immediately expected, excited the most lively emotions, and thrilled his bosom with hope and ecstacy.

Maria Lascelles had made a powerful impression on his heart. A complication of events had concurred to give increased power to her charms;—a series of causes had contributed to render her a most interesting object in his eyes: he recollected the tenderness which he entertained for her when a child;—during his recent illness, her mother had watched over him with the kindest attention and most anxious solicitude; and her own endeavours to soothe the irritation of his spirits, to tranquillize his mind, and revive him from the lethargy of despondence, had been unremittingly and zealously exerted.

The delicate sensibility and unaffected gentleness of Maria Lascelles, possessed an irresistible fascination over his mind.

Delmore was more distinguished for the mild urbanity of his manners, the benevolence of his affections, and the solidity of his judgment, than by any sprightliness of remark or excessive flow of animal spirits.

His mind always contemplative, now slightly tinged, by his recent affliction, with melancholy, delighted to transfuse its sorrows to a congenial bosom; and while Maria Lascelles' countenance displayed her pitying concern, and her eye glistened with the tear of sensibility, his sympathetic heart caught the soft contagion, and dissolved with tenderness.

His recent indisposition, and the excess of his grief had, in some degree,

weakened the energies of his intellect. His debilitated body and enfeebled mind had generated a morbid languor which shrunk from exertion; and he experienced a pleasing refuge in the soul-dissolving converse of a beautiful susceptible female; whose feeling heart melted with tenderness, and yielded to the infectious softness of woe.

He had separated from her with unfeigned reluctance; and, had he not received the positive declaration of Mrs. Lascelles' intention to reside at the cottage, the powerful claims of filial duty might have submitted to the more commanding influence of love.

Mr. Arnold's intelligence occasioned the liveliest joy; and Delmore's expressive countenance testified the pleasure that revelled in his bosom.

The worthy old man was delighted to behold him resuming his accus-

tomed serenity and good-humour:—he had heard, with concern and regret, that Lord Henry had yielded to the depressing influence of immoderate grief; and he dreaded, lest the philanthropy of his heart should be torpified, and the ardour of his benevolence chilled, by the petrifying action of excessive sorrow.

Delmore's condescension and affability had highly gratified him; and Mr. Arnold experienced a sensation of the purest satisfaction, when Lord Henry declared, at parting, that he should be a frequent visitor at the cottage.

On the following morning, Mr. Arnold enjoyed the pleasure of again viewing the lovely Maria blooming in all the pride of youth and beauty; the affectionate old man gazed at the beauteous maid with wonder and delight. With the garrulity of age,

he recounted the interesting scenes when she formerly resided at the cottage; he gratified the heart of Mrs. Lascelles by his eulogium on her daughter, as he prognosticated, that Maria's merit and beauty would secure her advancement to that rank in society, which she was so well calculated to adorn and dignify.

Mrs. Lascelles and her daughter were greatly moved by the kind effusions of their worthy host. Maria, when a child, loved Mr. Arnold as a parent; and his generous solicitude and tender partiality powerfully affected her grateful bosom.

Imagination cannot conceive a scene of greater delight and more genuine pleasure than Mr. Arnold's cottage now presented:—the arrival of his charming guests re-animated the spirits of the venerable man.—Mrs. Lascelles enjoyed a calm satisfaction in con-

tinuing in the seclusion of this tranquil retreat until the return of her husband ; — and Maria was enraptured at the anticipated meeting with Lord Henry, and the probable renewal of her friendship with Lady Georgina Delmore.

Delmore could not restrain his impatience to visit the ladies beyond the day after their arrival. Mutual congratulations were reciprocally interchanged: they felicitated themselves on the opportunities which the country would afford of consolidating that friendship which had so accidentally commenced.

"My sister," observed Delmore, addressing Mrs. Lascelles, "will be enchanted at the prospect of renewing her intimacy with your daughter. She was more firmly attached to her than any other person ; and since Miss Lascelles' departure from the

vicinity of Melrose Castle, Georgina has uniformly lamented the abrupt termination of their acquaintance."

"My daughter," replied Mrs. Lascelles, "has uniformly expressed a corresponding esteem for your sister; and must ever gratefully cherish the recollection of the condescension and attentions which she has experienced from your family."

"Oh! my dear mother," said the animated girl, "you are little acquainted with their excellence:—with what delicate consideration was I treated, even when a child, by the amiable Marchioness; — what kindness, what attention was manifested to me by Lady Georgina Delmore and Miss Temple!"

The lovely maid expatiated, with the ardour of youthful sensibility and unsophisticated friendship, on the sweetness of Lady Georgina's temper,

the generosity of her heart, and the vivacity of her disposition.

Delmore seized the first pause, to observe: "You must reserve the effervescence of your affection for my sister until to-morrow, when I intend to gratify her by accompanying me to the cottage."

Mrs. Lascelles politely thanked him for the intended honour; and Maria, with a look of tenderness and joy that enraptured his soul, earnestly entreated him not to omit the fulfilment of his promise.

Delmore had now extended his visit to an immoderate length: as he rose to depart, Maria playfully observed, that he must not presume to return, unless he was attended by his charming sister.

On his return to Melrose Castle, he communicated to his sister the

agreeable intelligence of their arrival at the cottage.

Lady Georgina was delighted with the anticipation of again embracing her favourite friend: —she asked a thousand questions of her brother:— did Maria still continue so beautiful? was she tall? was her complexion good? was ——?

"Hold! hold! my dear sister," interrupted Delmore laughingly; "do not overwhelm me with the multiplicity of your enquiries; I shall never be able to gratify the minute curiosity of a lady: therefore, if you are desirous to obtain satisfactory information, you may accompany me tomorrow to Mr. Arnold's cottage."

"Now you are a dear, kind, considerate brother; but recollect you will have no peace," observed the sprightly girl, "until you fulfil your promise."

On the following morning, Delmore drove his sister in his curricle to the cottage.

They were received by Mrs. Lascelles with every demonstration of respect and attention. Lady Georgina and Maria Lascelles, surprised at the alteration in each other's persons, experienced a momentary reserve; but the recollection of the endearing scenes of childhood instantly dissipated restraint; and they embraced with all the ardour of zealous friendship. The two friends were mutually delighted.

Anxious to cement their intimacy, and knowing that the unreserved communication of sentiments most powerfully contributes to confirm friendship, Delmore proposed to Mrs. Lascelles to take a short airing in the curricle.

As Mrs. Lascelles' health was ex-

tremely precarious, she cheerfully complied with his polite request.

Freed from restraint, the young friends again felicitated themselves on this auspicious meeting: they recounted the most prominent events which had occurred since their separation; and in the unreserved disclosure of their sentiments, Lady Georgina only concealed her attachment to Mansell; while Maria as carefully abstained from hinting at her prepossession for Delmore. They were so absorbed in devouring the recital of each others' narrative, and so eagerly inquisitive to learn every interesting event that had taken place since their first meeting, that Mrs. Lascelles and Lord Henry returned before they had finished their intended communications.

Lady Georgina reiterated her desire to recultivate Miss Lascelles' acquaintance; and having informed Mrs.

MAHARAJA ... 'S ... SARASW...

Lascelles, that the Marchioness of Melrose had desired her to express her obligations to that Lady, for her generous and careful attentions to Lord Henry, and that she intended to avail herself of an early opportunity of personally making her acknowledgments, she reluctantly returned to the Castle.

CHAPTER III.

The return of Mansell, for whose presence he had languished, as he wished to entrust the secret of his love, and to unbosom his sentiments to his confidential friend, completed Lord Henry Delmore's satisfaction.

Mansell was received with the greatest respect and cordiality by every branch of the Delmore family. Though Mansell's breast glowed with ecstacy, in anticipating the expected event which would exalt him to that situation, where fortune and rank would probably crown his dexterity

and talents, — he concealed his joy under the appearance of sorrow; and in compliance with the feelings of the family, he affected a slight dejection of spirits; and refrained from every attempt at gaiety.

By the unremitted exertions, the powerful influence, and zealous friendship of Lord Henry Delmore, Mr. Mansell was returned as a representative to parliament for the Borough of ———.

The darling object of his ambition obtained, he exulted in the imaginary elevation to office and dignity; — and his aspiring mind, stimulated by this dawning success, sought to ensure his aggrandizement by a union with Lady Georgina Delmore.

Mrs. Lascelles and her daughter were frequent visitors at the Castle. Lady Georgina became every day

more attached to Maria; and in compliance with her daughter's inclinations, the Marchioness of Melrose encouraged their intimacy. Lord Henry was delighted with the increasing friendship between his sister and Miss Lascelles, as it facilitated his opportunities of enjoying the society of that being whom he now discovered to be so essential to his happiness.

Time, whose gentle and soothing influence mitigates the severity of grief and mellows the acerbity of affliction, had diffused its balmy power over the Marchioness: the gloom of despondence was dispelled by the mild rays of resignation; and Melrose Castle was again the abode of serenity.

The arrival of Mansell had increased the vivacity and confirmed the felicity of Lady Georgina: the death of her father had removed the greatest

impediment to the accomplishment of their wishes:—relieved from the terror of his stern authority, Mansell departed from his usual reserve: he treated her with the most marked attention; and even presumed to insinuate, that the hope of obtaining her esteem constituted the pride of his existence.

Delmore now enjoyed the highest state of human felicity: — blessed with constant opportunities of breathing his passion to the object of his adorations; — and almost conscious that his assiduities were a welcome tribute, and his sighs a grateful incense to the mistress of his affections.

This blissful state was interrupted by the penetrating eyes of envy, and the jealous anxiety of maternal ambition.

Delmore's expressive countenance,

unaccustomed to disguise, had revealed the secret of his attachment to the scrutinizing observation of Lady Sarah Temple. The pleasure that danced in his eyes whenever Maria Lascelles appeared; —*his* frequent sighs, his constant endeavours to engage her in separate converse, testified the ardour and vehemence of his passion. *Her* modest timidity, her evident embarrassment, the blushes that suffused her cheeks when her eyes encountered those of Delmore, convinced Lady Sarah, that Maria's bosom glowed with corresponding affection.

She communicated her suspicions to the Marchioness; and displayed, in terms of the bitterest acrimony, the injurious consequences of such a connexion. The artful Lady Sarah successfully endeavoured to rouse the pride and excite the tenderness of her sister. The Marchioness could

not support the bare apprehension that her son might unite his fortunes with any person unennobled by rank: —her affection for her sister was fervent and sincere; — she regarded her niece with almost the same tenderness as her own daughter; and the marriage of Louisa Temple with Lord Henry was the predominant wish of her heart.

Lady Sarah Temple's intelligence overwhelmed the Marchioness with mortification and regret. In the first exacerbation of her anger and disappointment, she protested, that she would preclude all future intercourse between her daughter and Miss Lascelles; and that she should peremptorily insist on her son's abstaining from any communication with, and banishing every recollection of, this bewitching syren.

The prudent Lady Sarah gently in-

sinuated, that opposition and violence, by inflaming his ardent temper, would only defeat their intentions, and encourage him to revolt at their proposals.

"I would recommend you," she continued, "to refrain from any mention of Miss Lascelles, and merely solicit him to consummate his marriage with my daughter. By this stratagem, you will discover the precise state of his affections, by his reluctance or promptness to accede to your desires; and you can press or recede accordingly.

The imbecile mind of the Marchioness readily yielded to the persuasion and arguments of her sister.

On the following morning she requested Lord Henry to favour her with a private conference, for a few minutes, in her dressing-room. Delmore had scarcely joined his mother,

when she tenderly observed: "You must recollect, my son, that the prevailing desire of your lamented father was evinced in suggesting a suitable and honourable matrimonial connexion. My wishes fully coincide with those of my departed Lord; and the continued indisposition of the present Marquis, affords an additional motive to enforce the expediency of your compliance."

"I am sensibly convinced," replied Delmore, "of the tenderness, affection, and anxious solicitude for my welfare and happiness, which have prompted this proposal: my duty and gratitude will ever impel me to yield, if possible, to the inclination of the best of parents."

"Your felicity and the support of our house," resumed the Marchioness, "are the predominant motives which have induced me to re-urge this sub-

ject. This unreserved acquiescence displays another pleasing proof of that filial affection, which has so pre-eminently distinguished your conduct. Your alliance with your cousin promises to insure every felicity that the marriage state can afford, — where corresponding years, equal rank, and amiable dispositions are harmoniously blended."

Delmore, though he did not expressly consent to her proposal of marying Miss Temple, abstained from agitating his mother's mind by a peremptory refusal.

"Let us resume this subject, my dear mother at another period; as I have at present some business of importance that demands my immediate attention."

Deceived by his apparent acquiescence, the Marchioness conjectured

that he was prepared to accede to the proposed alliance. She applauded his dutiful and considerate conduct; and, after mutual expressions of affection, they separated.

Delmore was perplexed and distracted: — his bosom raged with the most violent and opposite emotions:— regard to the memory of his lamented father, affection for his widowed mother, powerfully urged him to comply with their wishes;—while his own happiness, and perhaps even the peace of an innocent lovely girl, stimulated him to decline this projected union. He resolved not to consign himself to perpetual misery, to annihilate every hope of happiness by agreeing to a marriage with his cousin; yet he revolted at the idea of distressing his mother, when her mind was so enfeebled by her recent affliction. His

former expedient of absenting himself for a short period from England, suggested itself to his mind; and he hoped that, as the Marchioness recovered from the depressing influence of inordinate grief, she would be enabled to support the annihilation of her project with more fortitude.

The present Marquis of Melrose had arrived at Falmouth; and was hourly expected at the Castle. The return of her favourite son and the agreeable society of his amiable lady would, he imagined, alleviate her disappointment, and prevent too poignant a regret for his departure.

Yet still Delmore was constrained to summon his utmost fortitude to tear himself from the lovely being, whose smiles diffused the sunshine of delight to his enraptured bosom;—whose tender sensibility agitated every

fibre of his heart with sympathetic emotions; and whose affection comprised every charm of existence. He was impatient to communicate his intention to the object of his idolatry: he trembled however for the issue of this meeting; — if Maria Lascelles should receive the intelligence with indifference and unconcern, he would then court an eternal banishment; — but should his fond expectations be realized, — should she manifest her regret for his departure, Delmore resolved to avow the passion which he cherished, and to solicit her to consent, on his return to England, to confirm his happiness by marriage.

Propitious to his hopes, on his next visit to the cottage, he found his charming mistress alone. Maria was greatly disconcerted by Delmore's manner and appearance:—he accosted

her with an air of reserve to which she had been unaccustomed; — a melancholy gloom overspread his countenance; — he seemed dejected and perplexed. After some trifling and desultory remarks, Delmore hesitatingly observed: — "My sister has, I presume, communicated to you the approaching change of my condition."

"Really, my Lord," replied the ingenuous girl, "Lady Georgina has not honoured me with any confidential disclosure concerning your future prospects."

"Surely," resumed Delmore with an affected gaiety, while his bosom was distracted by anxiety and fear, "you have heard that I am the unfortunate Benedict, selected by my friends to lead the amiable Miss Temple to the altar of Hymen!—"

The levity of his address, and the

unexpected and dreadful information momentarily overpowered her faculties, and for a time arrested the power of expression: — the colour forsook her cheeks; — a benumbing chilness palsied her heart; — and she drooped her head in silent dejection. Struggling to conceal her agitation, she falteringly remarked:

"This proceeding is somewhat sudden;—have you finally determined on this marriage?"

Delmore, who contemplated her emotions with mingled tenderness, concern, and rapture, flew to her assistance; and passionately seizing her hand, exclaimed: — "Never! never, my beloved Maria! will I submit to an union at which my soul revolts! Here, on my knees, I swear, my heart is devoted to you alone; nor will I rise from this spot, unless you consent

to bless your adoring Delmore, by sharing his fate and fortune!"

"Rise, I conjure you, my Lord," replied the agitated girl; "though I fear that you are but too necessary to my future peace, I will never form any connexion, unsanctioned by my mother's approbation."

Delmore kissed her hand with rapturous ecstacy; protesting that she had elevated him to the summit of earthly happiness; and that he would never urge her compliance unless accompanied by Mrs. Lascelles' consent.

He then communicated the substance of his conversation with his mother relative to his union with Miss Temple; and briefly explained the motives that compelled him to revisit the continent.

"I merely intend," he concluded, "to reside for a few months in Italy;

and, on my return to my native country, I will then, as you have generously permitted me to aspire to that felicity, demand my greatest earthly treasure from the hands of an approving parent."

The entrance of Mrs. Lascelles terminated this interesting *tête-à-tête.*

Lord Henry and his lovely mistress were delighted, confused, and agitated; with difficulty could they assume sufficient composure and self-collection to conceal their perturbation. Absorbed in their own reflections, they could not abstract their minds from the recent important confessions to support a conversation on general subjects.

Delmore was anxious to relieve the object of his adoration from the perplexity and embarrassment of his presence; and politely apologizing to Mrs. Lascelles for his abrupt depar-

ture, he returned to Melrose Castle, with a heart beating with ecstacy, and revelling in the anticipation of future bliss.

CHAPTER IV.

Delmore concealed his intention of leaving England from every person but his adored Maria. He was too affectionately attached to his brother, to remove from the Castle immediately on his revisiting his native land, and he was desirous that his mother's mind should be more composed before he communicated his intention to proceed to Italy. Self-gratification also powerfully contributed to postpone his meditated journey: his present situation enabled him to enjoy the converse and share the smiles of

his lovely mistress;—his heart revolted even at a temporary separation;—his ardent love whispered fears and doubts; and though convinced of the propriety of a short absence, he irresolutely lingered and delayed!—

The present Marquis of Melrose, had experienced considerable benefit from the salubrious air of Lisbon; and his family were delighted to contemplate his renovated appearance. Cheered by the presence of her favourite son, so unexpectedly improved in health, the Marchioness began to regain her accustomed serenity.

Delmore had been repeatedly and earnestly importuned by his mother to offer his hand to Louisa Temple; but he had hitherto contrived to propose some expedient to evade the adoption of a measure so repugnant to his feelings and affections.

A month had now elapsed since his brother had returned to the Castle; when Lord Henry, after dinner, at which the Delmore family were assembled, announced his intention to pass a few months at Florence. This communication surprised and grieved his family; his mother and the ladies strenuously endeavoured to dissuade him from the excursion: and even his brother could not refrain from expressing his disappointment and concern.

Though Delmore was inflexible in his determination, he wished to soothe his mother's spirits. "Expression is too feeble," he replied, "to manifest the grateful emotions that thrill my bosom for this display of solicitude and affection. The serious apprehensions which are entertained, that the misunderstanding between the Courts of St. James's and the Thuilleries, will

occasion a war between the two countries, induce me to avail myself of this interval of peace, to visit a country so interesting to every man of liberal acquirements. My absence will not exceed six months; when I shall return to those friends, from whom I never separate but with reluctance."

Finding that he was peremptorily fixed in his determination, his brother ceased to irritate him by a renewed opposition to his wishes; and as the Marchioness of Melrose was charmed by the society of her eldest son and his amiable lady, she did not violently re-urge her objections to his departure. Delmore now declared that he should proceed on his journey next week.

On the following morning, Lord Henry rode to Mrs. Mansell's, to visit his friend. Mansell was amazed and perplexed at Delmore's determination

to proceed to Florence. He was acquainted with his ardent attachment to Maria; — his penetrating mind had discovered that the bosom of the lovely maid had caught the soft infection; and his amazement was excited, that a successful lover should voluntarily withdraw from the soul-enchanting presence of a beauteous mistress.

Delmore frankly acknowledged the motives that impelled him to adopt the resolution of leaving England; and warmly pressed his friend to accompany him in this excursion.

Mansell did not receive the invitation with delight or satisfaction; he was averse to absent himself, at this critical period, from Lady Georgina; — but he was too well assured that Delmore's friendship was essential to the attainment of his objects and the

advancement of his interests, to hazard the slightest diminution of his esteem by a reluctant compliance with his wishes.

With affected pleasure, he replied to Lord Henry's eager solicitations, that, "Though my affairs require my presence in England, every consideration shall be subservient to the more powerful demands of friendship."

Delmore thanked his friend for his ready acquiescence; and after some conversation relative to the arrangements for their intended journey, they separated.

The reluctance of Mansell to accompany his friend, was however decreased by the consciousness, that he had securely engaged Lady Georgina's affections: by his artful address and insinuating attentions, he had extorted a confession that he was not indiffe-

rent to her heart: he knew that he could not at present avow his passion; and that he dare not now solicit her hand. He secretly exulted in the hope, that the recent death of her father, and the retirement in which the family now lived at the Castle, would preserve her from the addresses of another lover.

Mansell had withdrawn from the Castle for a short time, under the pretence of business.—His favourite valet had received a letter from his brother; in which that callous-hearted monster related, that when Miss Byron discovered the imposition that had been practised, and learnt the cruelty of her pretended husband, she became wild with horror, and frantic with despair. The sensibility of her mind, perpetually irritating her delicate frame, induced a fever on the

brain; and after a short illness, she closed a wretched existence, in all the frenzied ravings of madness.

This heart-rending description of the cruel death of a beautiful female whom he had once loved,—who had generously and unsuspectingly reposed on his honour,—whose confidence he had abused,—who had fallen a victim to his treachery and barbarity,—harrowed his soul;—and he writhed under the excruciating tortures of guilt and remorse.—

"There, there I bleed! there pull the horrid cords
"That strain my cracking nerves! engines and
"wheels,
"That piece-meal grind, are beds of down, and
"balm
"To that soul-racking thought!"

The fascinations of pleasure, and the allurements of ambition could not silence the admonitions of conscience,

nor prevent the secret whisperings of remorse;—and Mansell was constrained to retire from the observation of his friends, to conceal his agonies in the obscurity of seclusion.

Though Lord Henry's invitation militated in some respects against his interests and wishes; yet he hoped that a change of scene, and diversity of objects might enable him to discard the memory of an ill-fated being, who haunted and tortured his imagination.

Delmore's severest trial still remained; and those only, whose hearts have felt the influence of love in all its glowing ardour, can conceive the various emotions which agitated his bosom in parting from a beloved mistress, whose endearing smiles constituted the greatest charm of existence,

whose affection strewed the path of life with flowers of never-fading delight.

In their last interview on the day preceding his departure, Lord Henry conjured the sovereign arbitress of his fate to conceal their attachment from her mother; — solemnly protesting, that, on his return to England, he would rapturously conjure Mrs. Lascelles to sanction their union. He then extorted from the trembling maid a reluctant promise to correspond during their separation: — she at first strenuously resisted this proposal; but the persuasive ardour and tender intreaties of her lover silenced her objections.

During this distressing scene, sorrow and dejection were depictured on their countenances; — every nerve was wrung with agony;—a thousand half-formed expressions that struggled for

MAHARAJA ...OJI'S SARASWA...

utterance, died away upon their lips;—they were absent, forlorn, and wretched. Still Delmore lingered and hesitated:—at length he summoned resolution to tear himself from the idol of his affections; and, after mutual protestations of eternal constancy, distractedly terminated the agonizing conflict.

CHAPTER V.

Lord Henry's departure for Italy, was regretted by every inhabitant of Melrose Castle; the tenderness and sorrow displayed by his relatives, their kind expressions of regret, and fervent wishes for his speedy return, powerfully affected his generous bosom. With a heart melting with sympathy, and overflowing with affection, Delmore parted from his family; and, accompanied by Mansell, pursued his journey to Florence.

Delmore was constrained to remain

a few days in town, to procure letters of credit on some commercial or banking establishments on the continent: he availed himself of this delay, to visit Major Belford.

The gallant veteran welcomed his noble friend with all the cordiality and ardour of a soldier. Delmore politely enquired concerning Miss Dormer; — when the venerable soldier, with joy sparkling in his eyes, and the animated glow of pleasure brightening his features, eagerly replied, "Thank heaven! my prayers have been heard; — the object of my fondest wish is accomplished: that amiable girl, whom I have cherished and protected with a father's fondness, will now be restored to her affectionate parents, and elevated to that rank, on which her merit and virtue will reflect the brightest lustre."

"You surprise me," observed Delmore: "is this a recent discovery?"

"My knowledge of Harriet's family," continued the Major, "was only obtained yesterday.—If your Lordship can devote a few minutes to the recital, I will develop the accidental circumstances which have led to the disclosure of the mystery of her situation."

Lord Henry entreated his friend to gratify him by the narrative.

"My servant informed me yesterday morning," resumed the Major, "that an unfortunate woman, who was almost on the verge of dissolution, was desirous of communicating some interesting particulars, which she would disclose to no other person. I was surprised at the singularity of her request; but as I understood she was in extreme danger, I imagined, from her extreme caution and guarded se-

cresy, that her communication must be important. Under this impression, I accompanied the messenger to an obscure habitation, and was immediately ushered into a squalid garret, where, extended on a pallet, I beheld a female,—the ashy paleness of whose cheek, and the hollow dimness of her eyes, evinced, that her earthly sufferings would soon terminate.

On my approach to the bed, she raised her head from the pillow: but when her eye met mine, her countenance was distorted by pain and guilt;—her feeble frame could not support the agonizing conflict; but overpowered by the acuteness of her sensations, she sunk into insensibility.

When she awoke to reason and reflection, she requested to be left alone with Major Belford: when the messenger had retired, she fixed her eyes

intently on my countenance, and asked me, if I had any recollection of her person. On my replying that I could not recall her features to my memory, she observed: "I am not surprised; — misery and remorse have made great ravages on my constitution."—

"Apprehensive that her extreme debility would preclude her from completing her intended communications, I earnestly requested her to moderate her emotions, to abstain from all prefatory observations, and proceed to the more immediate object of this interview."

"You see before you," said the wretched woman, "an affecting instance of the horrible effects of a deviation from virtue, and the direful consequences of a disregard of religion: — my miseries in this world have been excessive; and I can only

hope to secure a pardon from the God of mercy, by an unreserved disclosure of my guilt and injustice.

"At the age of seventeen, I relinquished the protection of my parent, by the solicitations and persuasions of a young gentleman of the name of Dormer. During two years, I revelled, with my lover, in the enjoyment of every luxurious gratification and expensive pleasure. The report of our connexion at last reached the ears of Mr. Dormer's father; who determined to dissolve this attachment; and, to accomplish this purpose, he obliged his son to embark for Calcutta, at which place he had procured him a lucrative situation.

"A lovely girl was the fruit of our affection. During three years, Mr. Dormer regularly remitted me a considerable stipend for her support, and promised, as she advanced in age, to

increase the allowance. My pretty prattler had scarcely attained her fourth year, when she was seized with a scarlet fever; and, after a short illness, my sweet Harriet expired in my arms.

"Within a few weeks after her decease, I received a letter from Mr. Dormer; in which he stated that he had obtained permission to return to Europe for the re-establishment of his health. This intelligence overwhelmed me with alarm and perplexity. I was uncertain whether he intended to renew our connexion: the death of my daughter would deprive me of the allowance, which Mr. Dormer agreed to advance for her education and maintenance. Should Mr. Dormer, in consequence of his daughter's death, have withdrawn his support, I might then have been reduced to the necessity of engaging in some laborious or menial occupation. One

only mode to avert this dreaded evil presented itself to my mind; as my daughter was but three months old when Mr. Dormer quitted England, I conceived that, if I could procure any girl about her age, I might readily impose that substitute on the unsuspecting father." ——

The exertion of speaking and the violent agitations of her mind overpowered her feeble frame, and for a few moments she was unable to proceed. I gently entreated her to compose her spirits, and to abbreviate her story.

"A favourable opportunity" (she resumed) "immediately occurred to accomplish my guilty purpose: one morning as I was walking with a favourite servant, whom I had corrupted to second my scheme, I perceived a lovely girl about four years of age, at the gate of a garden be-

longing to a cottager in the village near which I resided. This fortunate moment was too propitious to be lost; — by cajoling and offering the pretty innocent some cakes we prevailed on her to accompany us; and immediately turning into an unfrequented lane, my maid lifted the child into her arms, and, covering her with her cloak, proceeded with the greatest precipitancy to my residence."—

"Certainly," interrupted Delmore, "this injured child must have been the sister of my friend, and the daughter of Lord Harefield."

"Your conjectures, my Lord, are, I believe, well founded," replied Major Belford:—"however, I will proceed with the narrative of this abandoned woman; and, you can then form your own conclusions."——

"The seclusion in which I lived," she continued, "enabled me to conceal

my valuable acquisition. Apprehensive of a discovery, and dreading the consequences of detection, I determined to quit England. Previous to my journey, I left a letter for Mr. Dormer, with the gentleman through whose hands I received the money for my daughter's support ; — in which, I informed him, that my physician had recommended me to repair to Italy for the restoration of my health.

" I shall pass over the intervening events which occurred from the day I trepanned the dear child, until my arrival at Naples. At that city I was joined by Mr. Dormer. The innocent gambols and sportive playfulness of the beautiful Harriet soothed the pangs, and enlivened the languor of sickness: often has Mr. Dormer strained his supposed daughter to his bosom, with all the raptures of parental fondness. The benign influence of the climate,

and the engaging charms of the lovely child, produced the most salutary effects on a constitution debilitated by luxurious indulgence, and still farther enfeebled by a residence in India.

"The consciousness of my atrocious guilt and inhuman barbarity, in having deprived our reputed daughter of her birth-right, and robbed her parents of an amiable child, embittered every enjoyment; — yet, though the compunctious visitings of conscience agonized my mind, the temptation of securing luxury and independence, was too powerful for me to resist, and I endeavoured to lull the suggestions of remorse by the consolatory self-illusion, that as Mr. Dormer intended to provide so munificently for Harriet, I should not deprive her of ease and opulence. Thus ready are our minds to supply argu-

ments to justify our inclinations;—and so prone is human nature, having once erred, to be reconciled to its own infamy and depravity!—Even my present state of tempered enjoyment was destined speedily to terminate.—At a dinner given by an English nobleman, then at Naples, on the King's birth-day, Mr. Dormer, who was too much attached to the luxuries and conviviality of the table, drank to such excess, that he was conveyed home in a state of inebriety: during this night, he was seized with an apoplectic fit, and before I could procure medical assistance, that generous bosom, which had ever glowed with benevolence and affection, was cold and torpid.

"As his death was so sudden and unexpected, he had unfortunately made no provision for me or his supposed daughter. I was now as desi-

rous of disengaging myself from this injured creature, as I had been formerly anxious to seduce her from her parents. Often did I determine to restore her to her family: but the dread of the punishment due for my flagitious conduct, deterred me from my intentions. When I was thus wavering and irresolute, I unhappily formed an acquaintance with a young officer, of pleasing person and insinuating address. His attentions gratified my vanity; his constant and engaging assiduities at last effaced every tender recollection of Mr. Dormer; and my bosom raged with the most violent and ungovernable passion. This artful adventurer no sooner perceived the impression that he had made on my heart, than he confidently and warmly pressed me to accompany him to England. He represented himself as the son of an

Irish nobleman: he acknowledged that he was at present under pecuniary embarrassments, and that his extravagance had offended his family: he however protested, that he must ultimately inherit a considerable fortune; and that if I would generously condescend to blend my fate with his, I should be sovereign unrivalled mistress of his affections, and participate his future splendour and opulence. Allured by his dazzling proposals, and blinded by my passion, I determined to remove with him from Naples; — and as we proposed to return to our own country, I resolved to consign the lovely Harriet to the humane protection of strangers. All-righteous Heaven! though thy punishments may be protracted, — the hour of retribution will arrive! — — I will not harrow your benevolent feelings by a prolonged recital of the complicated miseries which

have since assailed me: conscious guilt, unavailing remorse, and biting penury, have been my constant attendants. A thousand times have I intended to proclaim my infamy, and communicate these dreadful events to the parents of the abused innocent: but I dreaded the punishment due to my crimes; and I hesitated to make even this inadequate atonement for her injuries, until it has pleased the eternal Avenger of guilt to threaten to bury my vices and miseries in the oblivion of the grave! I have continued for two months in the house of these humane people, under the accumulated pressure of disease and want: the ravages of a consumption have incapacitated me from labour; and, unless they had benignly succoured me, I should long since have terminated a loathed existence in the streets or in a workhouse.

"They mentioned my deplorable condition to a relation, who is a servant of Miss Dormer.—The good-natured girl communicated my distressing story to her amiable mistress: her feeling and generous bosom sympathized with my sufferings; she immediately sent me some pecuniary assistance; and desired her apothecary to attend me. Not satisfied with this exertion of benevolence, she cheered the abode of sickness and ruin with her presence. My dim eyes could faintly distinguish objects: but when the beneficent angel approached my bed, and pressing my feverish emaciated hand, enquired, in accents of soothing tenderness, if I was better, I thought that her features were familiar to me. She soon retired, informing me that, if I wanted any necessaries, I must send to her; stating, at the same time, that her

name was Dormer; and that she resided at Major Belford's, in Bury-Street, St. James's. — I recollected your name; and I immediately concluded that you had benevolently protected her, when that being who had so dishonourably trepanned, still more inhumanly deserted her.

On the following morning, the amiable girl called at my wretched habitation; and renewed her tender enquiries. Impatient to satisfy my anxious doubts, and eager to do justice to her, who was relieving her fellest enemy, I presumed to enquire if she had not formerly lived with her mother at Naples? The mention of so revered a name suffused her eyes with tears; she sobbed and wept; and faintly answered, that her mother had died in that city. She then informed me of her mother's sudden and extraordinary disappearance; and

asked if I had ever been acquainted with Mrs. Dormer? I replied, that I had accidentally been in company with a Mrs. Dormer at Naples; and as she bore the same name, I imagined that she might possibly be her daughter. This confirmation of my suspicions, and the horrid prospect which this disclosure presented to my tortured imagination, overpowered my languid frame; and I sunk exhausted on my pillow. — Miss Dormer, too considerate to distress me, by any further exertions, retired. — As soon as I could recover sufficient self-collection, I requested you to honour me with this conference."—

" Here this ill-fated woman," observed the Major, " presented a spectacle of horror and anguish, that would have terrified the most hardened villain, and extorted commiseration even from the most unrelenting.

The tears rolled down her pallid cheeks; —she wrung her hands in an agony of grief; —her features were distorted; —she uttered broken ejaculations, interrupted by convulsive sobs. The violence of her agitations, and the sincere contrition which she manifested, touched my soul; —I forgot her crimes, and only compassionated her sufferings.

"Her narration excited the most ungovernable emotions; —hope, incertitude, and fear contended in my bosom: unable to restrain my impatience, I eagerly demanded, if she knew the parents of my beloved Harriet. My impetuosity aroused her from the lethargic stupor of excessive grief; she faintly replied, her voice being almost choaked by sobs, that when the pretty innocent was first conveyed to her house, she then informed her, that her name was Har-

riet Dorville: in the corner of a handkerchief which she had on her neck, was marked the letter H under a coronet. — This badge of distinction," continued this unhappy wretch, "induced me to ask, to whom this handkerchief belonged; when the sweet child answered, that it was her mamma's. This circumstance convinced me, that the child, whom I had so basely trepanned, was the daughter of Lord Harefield, whose seat was contiguous to the village."

"Here," concluded the Major, "the perpetrator of this iniquity delivered to me this handkerchief, which your Lordship will observe, is marked as she described. I then parted from the dying wretch, having first solemnly promised that I would screen her from punishment; and that every attention should be shewn her during her illness."

"Your lovely protegée," observed Lord Henry, "is unquestionably the daughter of Lord Harefield:—the place, the time, the age when she was stolen by this abandoned woman, every circumstance, exactly correspond with the account of his sister's mysterious disappearance, which I have heard from my friend Dorville. Have you acquainted the family with this happy and almost miraculous discovery?"

"As Lord Harefield is now at his country-seat," replied the Major, "I have written a statement of this woman's narrative, which I intend to transmit to him by this day's post.

"I shall also congratulate my friend Dorville," said Lord Henry, "and exhort him to repair to town immediately; as it may be necessary to question the author of this villainy more

closely: though I confess, that I consider her evidence, concurring with the answer of the child and the mark of the letter H, and a coronet on the handkerchief, as irrefragable and conclusive."

Lord Henry then retired from his gallant friend; and, impatient to complete his benevolent intentions, hastened to Delmore House.

CHAPTER VI.

Delmore enjoyed the heart-approving pleasure of conducting a tender father to view a beloved child, and fold to his parental bosom an engaging daughter, whose mysterious disappearance had been unceasingly deplored, and whose restoration excited the liveliest sensations of joy and rapture. Lord Henry accompanied his noble friend to Major Belford's residence: the gallant veteran reiterated every particular relating to the blooming Harriet, which had been disclosed to him by the unhappy woman, who had so inhumanly trepan-

ned and abandoned her ;—while tears of delight and gratitude rolled down the cheeks of Lord Harefield during the pathetic recital.

The enraptured father breathed his pious thanks to the beneficent Author of the universe, who had so providentially preserved his long-lost daughter, and had so unexpectedly restored her to her distracted and doating parents. Lord Harefield then eagerly enquired for his charming Harriet.

Delmore conjured him to moderate the excess of his blissful emotions, as the sensibility of his amiable daughter would otherwise be unable to support so affecting an interview.

Major Belford now retired, to conduct his interesting companion to the presence of an affectionate father, who impatiently panted to clasp his lovely daughter to a heart melting with parental tenderness.

The lovely girl, oppressed by the tumultuous emotions which rioted in her bosom, advanced, (leaning on Major Belford's arm,) with tottering steps, and sunk, overpowered by the poignancy of her sensations, on her father's breast. Lord Harefield pressed her to his heart, and lavished the tenderest caresses on his almost senseless daughter; while tears of affection and joy glistened in his eyes. A flood of tears relieved the overcharged bosom of the amiable Harriet: as soon as she recovered her reason and self-collection, she mentally ejaculated the grateful effusions of her soul to that protecting Providence, which had again blessed her with a parent's fostering kindness: she knelt, and kissed her father's hand, bathing it with tears of filial tenderness and duty.

Lord Henry and the worthy veteran, desirous of affording Lord Hare-

field, and his charming daughter, full opportunity to indulge their blissful raptures, unchecked by the presence of, and unperceived even by their warmest friends, had immediately removed from this interesting and affecting scene.--After a short absence, Major Belford and his noble friend returned: with considerable difficulty and persuasion, Delmore prevailed on Lord Harefield to permit his daughter to retire, to regain that composure which had been so powerfully disturbed by this soul-delighting meeting. Lord Harefield at length reluctantly yielded to the entreaties of his noble friend: and after again rapturously folding his beloved daughter in his arms, he unwillingly departed from her dear presence.

The delighted father requested Lord Henry and Major Belford, to accompany him to the habitation of the

wretched woman, who had inflicted so severe a wound on his domestic happiness.

On their arrival at her humble residence, the owner of the house informed the distinguished party, that her lodger had early in the morning terminated her earthly sufferings.—The dreadful fate and excessive miseries of this abandoned woman, extinguished all resentment in the mind of Lord Harefield; and he only reflected on the ecstatic pleasure, which she had communicated to his bosom by the unexpected restoration of his daughter: he desired that the remains of this unfortunate female should be decently interred.

On the following morning, Lord Harefield, accompanied by Major Belford and his daughter, proceeded with the greatest expedition to Dorville Abbey, where a fond mother and af-

fectionate relations impatiently and anxiously expected her arrival.

While the enraptured parents were exulting in the recovery of their idolized offspring, the winds were wafting Lord Henry and Mansell to Gallia's fertile shores.

Delmore had scarcely landed in France; when he hastened to pour out his tender effusions to the sovereign mistress of his affections, his adored Maria. In his letter, he fervently declared, that she reigned unrivalled possessor of his heart; that the hope of preserving her love and meriting her predilection, constituted the only pleasure of existence;—and that his breast would never experience bliss, until he could in person re-assure her of the unextinguishable ardour and inflexible constancy of his affection. He conjured her to bless him

immediately with a few lines; observing that the perusal of her dear epistles, would be the only gratification which he could enjoy during the tedious hours of absence.

"Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
"Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid;
"They live, they speak, they breathe what love
"inspires,
"Warm from the heart, and faithful to its fires."

Delmore proceeded on the following day towards Italy; whither he more impatiently pursued his route, in the anxious and fond expectation that, on his arrival at Florence, he would be cheered by a letter from his idolized mistress.

CHAPTER VII.

On entering Florence, Lord Henry immediately proceeded to enquire if his charming mistress had condescended to bless his eager hopes, by a renewed acknowledgment of her affection, or at least to lament his absence, and approve his passion. With a heart throbbing with the most tumultuous emotions, Delmore hastened to the banker's, to whose care he had directed his letters to be forwarded: he eagerly examined the superscriptions; — they were the hand-writing of his brother and Major Belford. Gratified

as Delmore was by the generous attention of a brother whom he affectionately loved, and a friend whom he so greatly esteemed, the kind and solicitous manifestation of friendship and fraternal love could not dissipate the chagrin and disappointment which oppressed his labouring bosom.

Mortified, sullen, and perplexed, he retired to his hotel, ruminating on the destruction of his blissful expectations. — Those only who have been constrained to separate from the object of their dearest wishes; — who anxiously and fondly expect that beloved being to communicate her secret hopes and fears; to breathe her tenderest thoughts; to confess the joy which thrills her bosom from the knowledge of her lover's affection, can conceive the various passions that agitated Delmore's breast! love, hope,

and suspicion, by turns assailed and distracted him.

Miss Lascelles had solemnly promised to cheer the lingering hours of absence, by the pleasing indulgence of epistolary correspondence: this anticipated delight had alone induced Delmore reluctantly to pursue his journey: — had Maria Lascelles refused to have answered his amorous effusions, he would not have sacrificed his own happiness to a mother's peace, by tearing himself from the idol of his tenderest affection.

Days and weeks passed on; but no letter arrived from that being, in whom his every hope of felicity was centered.

Delmore endeavoured to summon up the feelings of mortified pride and insulted love; but they resembled more the sudden transitory frenzy of despair, than the steady determined

resolutions of manly fortitude; amidst the powerful conflict of opposing passions, love however maintained his accustomed ascendancy.

Thus subdued by resistless love, he formed innumerable excuses for her conduct; one moment he imagined that his letter might have miscarried; the next, he dreaded that she had been attacked by illness, which might have incapacitated her from calling at Mrs. Mansell's, to whose care he had directed his letter.

He therefore determined to repeat once more his ardent protestations of affection and eternal constancy; —to pourtray the miseries which he now endured from her silence, and to conjure her, if she continued to value his love, to relieve the tortures of incertitude and suspense, by a reiteration of those endearing sentiments,

which had escaped her lips in their parting interview.

Neither the splendid entertainments nor brilliant parties to which he was continually invited, possessed sufficient powers to dissipate the gloom which overshadowed his countenance; — the influence of music, the charms of the most beautiful and enchanting females, could not extract the canker-worm that gnawed his heart; nor dispel the omnipotence of one passion, whose resistless magic fascinated his bosom. The fine galleries of paintings, where genius, taste, and nature, combine to enchant the senses, to elevate the sentiments, and enrapture the imagination; the beautiful statues, where vigour of conception, and accuracy of imitation astonish and delight the observer; were powerless to awaken him to a high relish of their numerous perfections.

His refined sentiments and classic taste were indeed gratified by these exhibitions; but these exquisite models of painting and sculpture, in this favourite Temple of the Arts, which, under other circumstances, would have inspired his breast with the most enthusiastic admiration, were regarded with slight emotion, and received only the meed of frigid approbation.

Three months had now expired; and no letter arrived from Miss Lascelles.

The restlessness of Delmore's feelings degenerated to the gloomy sullenness of despondency; the pleasures of this gay and luxurious city palled; every enjoyment faded before his distempered mind; at the festive board he was frequently absent and silent; and even the balmy influence of friendship was insufficient to soothe the corrosion of his bosom, or to extract the barbed shaft of disappointed love.

He often refused to accompany Mansell to the magnificent entertainments of the Tuscan Nobles: he appeared to delight only in solitude, where, unperceived and undisturbed, he could brood in moody melancholy over his miseries.

Stung with indignation and slighted love, he, one moment, almost resolved to return to England, to upbraid his faithless mistress with her inconstancy and duplicity: insulted pride and conscious dignity, however, decided his wavering intentions; — he shrunk from the meanness of humiliating himself to an imperious woman; — and he determined to extirpate, if possible, this unworthy passion from his bosom.

Mansell endeavoured, by every ingenious argument and artful suggestion, to inflame his resentment against Miss Lascelles, to arouse his slumber-

ing pride, and to confirm his vow of consigning the lovely maid to eternal oblivion.

Lord Henry, yielding to the persuasion and exhortations of Mansell, determined to remove to Naples; under the expectation that the change of scene and diversity of objects would gradually banish from his mind the memory of one, whose image was too deeply engraven on his heart to be easily obliterated. This arrangement was particularly agreeable to Mansell, as it at once gratified his love of pleasure, and promised to advance some of his most favourite projects. During their journey, Mansell's spirits were elevated to the excess of joy; his vivacity, which, since the dreadful intelligence he had received concerning Miss Byron, had been occasionally depressed, resumed its wonted sprightliness; and by the versa-

tility and gaiety of his remarks and the brilliancy of his wit, he partially dispelled the clouds of melancholy, that obscured the countenance of his dejected friend.

On their arrival at Naples, our travellers waited on the English Ambassador, by whom they were received with that urbanity and politeness which so strongly marked the behaviour of that distinguished person. Under his auspices, they were introduced to every person of rank and consideration in Naples: every succeeding day presented a varied scene of gaiety and amusement.

Mansell renewed his acquaintance with the Marquis Alvari, with whom he had formerly been on terms of great intimacy in England. Grateful for the attentions formerly shewn by Mansell, and flattered by the friendship of a nobleman of Delmore's

rank and talents, the Marquis Alvari evinced on every occasion the most marked respect for his distinguished friends. Lord Heury and Mansell always participated the numerous and luxurious entertainments, with which the Marquis indulged the *bon-vivants* of Naples: here pleasure held undivided sway, and his palace might be appropriately termed the Temple of Voluptuousness.

The Marquis Alvari was now in his fortieth year. His person was small and pleasing; his address insinuating, and his conversation vivacious and agreeable. The urbanity of his manners, the elegance of his dress, and his delicate and minute observance of the laws of *bienséance*, stamped him as a man, whom Chesterfield would have received as his favourite disciple. His establishment was costly and magnificent, his nu-

merous retinue and the splendid decorations of his princely mansion, added dignity and grandeur to his entertainments, which rivalled, in profusion and expense, the luxurious banquets of a Roman emperor. He was passionately addicted to play; he rioted uncontrolled in every voluptuous indulgence and expensive gratification. His unbounded extravagance, and ungovernable love of pleasure had, conjoined with the immense sums which he had dissipated at the gaming table, so much encumbered his extensive estates, that he was strongly suspected of resorting to the most base and flagitious means to enable him to continue his career of licentiousness and prodigality.

In public life, he was notorious for his profligate dereliction of every honourable principle, and his political tergiversations had been so frequent

and glaring, that he was generally considered as a partisan of France to advance her interest, and to facilitate the subjugation of his devoted country. In a word, he hoped by the disorganization of the government, and the ascendancy of the French party, to obtain a situation of emolument and trust, where, by corruption and oppression, he might repair his shattered fortunes.

Accustomed to gratify every inclination of his heart, the Marquis had lately been united to the most celebrated beauty in Naples, whose charms and attractions were the constant theme of panegyric among the libertines and cavaliers of Italy.

The Marchesa Alvari had scarcely entered the twentieth year of her age. — Her figure was tall, graceful, and elegant: her face was of the Grecian outline; her fine black eyes darting

fire, gave brilliancy and animation to her expressive countenance. She was distinguished for the taste and elegance of her habiliments; her transparent drapery was folded, with all the meretricious art of a Laïs or Messalina, to display the voluptuous contour of limbs, formed by the indulgent hand of nature with the most exquisite symmetry. Wherever she moved, her matchless charms excited desire and admiration in every breast; and numbers, who wished to escape the resistless fascinations of her dazzling beauties, carefully avoided her dangerous presence.

Allured by his exalted rank, she had consented to accept the hand of the Marquis; his splendid fortune, costly retinue, and magnificent establishment gratified her vanity; and promised to afford her inexhaustible means of indulging her unbridled

love of pleasure. The evident indifference which she manifested towards her husband, the encouragement that she extended to, and the delight with which she received the attentions of others, attracted a croud of admirers; her brilliant parties were attended by all the gay and fashionable; and every youth was emulous of displaying his gallantry and accomplishments, to captivate the object of such universal admiration. Amidst the crouds who offered their adoration at the shrine of this idol, the beautiful Marchesa appeared most gratified by the elegant converse and polished manners of Lord Henry Delmore. Though devoted to luxury and voluptuousness, the Marchesa's intellect was highly cultivated; and she illustrated, in the elevation of her sentiments and the delicacy of her taste, the remark of a fine writer

who has beautifully observed: "That "elegant speculations are sometimes "found to float on the surface of the "mind, while bad passions possess "the interior regions of the heart."— Such was the woman who endeavoured to evince her predilection, by every delicate attention and marked regard: Delmore's vanity was flattered by the condescension and partiality of so alluring a female: — he was a constant visitor at the Alvari Palace; and his youthful pride exulted in being enrolled as the favourite *cicisbeo* of the beautiful Marchesa.

CHAPTER VIII.

Amidst the scenes of luxury and dissipation in which Delmore mingled at the Palace of Alvari, notwithstanding the tumult of pleasure in which he now rioted, the image of Maria Lascelles, arrayed in all the attractive loveliness of youth and innocence, disturbed his repose, and embittered his enjoyments. Sometimes he imagined, that she might be prevented from writing; — that she had inadvertently breathed the secret of her attachment to some confidante, who had communicated it to her mo-

ther, who had expressly interdicted her daughter from engaging in a clandestine correspondence: often would he contrast her engaging simplicity and unaffected modesty with the confident deportment, and assured behaviour of the Marchesa.

One morning, as he was ruminating on the evident sènsibility, which Maria had displayed, and the violent emotions which agitated her bosom during their parting interview, Mansell entered the room.. Impressed with the interesting subject of his meditations, Lord Henry observed:

"I have been thinking, Mansell, that I may have acted with too much precipitancy in censuring Miss Lascelles. It is possible that her silence may be the result of necessity: her mother may have prohibited her writing. — I can with difficulty believe that a heart of such exquisite susceptibility, so pure and

unadulterated, so untainted by vanity or affectation, can delight to sport with the feelings of an ardent and disinterested admirer."

"I have frequently," replied Mansell, "presumed to differ from your Lordship in the exalted opinion which you entertain of women. Experience has convinced me, that they are generally capricious, vain, trifling, and unfeeling; — pleased to secure the affections and engage the heart of a lover, that they may gratify their vanity by sacrificing his peace and happiness, by accepting the hand of a more opulent or exalted admirer. — How often do they even prefer a libertine or gamester to a man of honour and probity. I could now adduce a forcible illustration of my observations; and I more than suspect that Miss Lascelles, whose imaginary virtues and perfections you have so rap-

turously extolled, possesses in an eminent degree the levity and inconstancy of her sex."

This strong insinuation, the ironical-tone in which it was uttered, and the significant looks which accompanied it, convinced Lord Henry, that Mansell had obtained intelligence which justified so pointed an allusion. Agitated with incertitude, distracted by fears and influenced by affection, Delmore warmly conjured him to developе every circumstance relative to the conduct and behaviour of a being, who still maintained so powerful an interest in his heart.

Mansell pretended reluctance; and while he artfully hesitated to comply with Delmore's intreaties, his evident unwillingness to communicate his information distracted and tortured the lover's imagination; it seemed,

"As if there were some monster in his thoughts,
"Too hideous to be seen."

Racked with impatience, Lord Henry vehemently insisted on an explanation of his mysterious insinuations.

"I am concerned," said Mansell, "that any allusion to Miss Lascelles should have excited such violent emotions in your bosom; if I had even remotely suspected, that my hints would have disturbed your repose, or occasioned such uneasiness, my friendship would have induced me to bury my doubts in my own breast. Disregard the ebullitions of a too zealous friend; perhaps I have been premature;—the report may be unfounded; my suspicions may be unjust; the whole may be only a malicious and scandalous fabrication!

"What report!—what suspicions! what scandal!" passionately exclaimed Lord Henry.

"Your vehemence alarms me;—look there, my Lord," observed Man-

sell, presenting an English newspaper.

Delmore eagerly seized the paper from his hands, and glanced his eyes rapidly over the subjoined paragraph:

"Yesterday morning, a duel was fought in the fields near Chalk Farm, between Sir Harry Henley and Captain Sparkle. After each party had discharged a pistol, the seconds interfered, and the affair was terminated without bloodshed. This rencontre originated in a dispute, which, our readers already know, occurred between these gentlemen at the Opera on Saturday night, concerning the beautiful and accomplished Miss Maria L*sc*ll*s, who was in the company of the amiable Marchioness of Melrose. It is reported that Sir Harry Henley will, in a few days, lead the beautiful object of contention to the Hymeneal altar."

Goaded by rage, insulted love, and mortified pride, Delmore franticly dashed the paper on the ground, and, his lips quivering with indignation, exclaimed :

"Damn'd, damn'd deceiver! treacherous, unfeeling woman!"

He arose, and paced about the room, franticly striking his forehead, his countenance distorted by passion; muttering maledictions on her levity and inconstancy. Having continued some time traversing the room, he at length impetuously rushed out of the apartment.

Mansell did not oppose his departure, or attempt to follow him; he was convinced, that the rising tempest of his soul must rage uncontrolled, and that any endeavour to impede its course would only increase its fury.

Lord Henry's character and dispo-

sition had been attentively studied by his artful friend; Mansell knew that, though Lord Henry possessed the most gentle affections, and a heart overflowing with sympathy and sensibility; his passions were violent and ardent. Maria Lascelles had indeed made a powerful impression on his heart; his efforts to banish the lovely maid from his imagination had been ineffectually exerted; the struggle to tear her from his bosom would be severe; but Mansell thought that the poignant sense of outraged affection and slighted love would, by arousing his pride, enable him to subdue this passion.

For several hours Mansell permitted him to indulge, uninterrupted even by the presence of a friend, his melancholy reflections. The fiery particles of his rage had exploded;—the storm had exhausted its fury; and when Mansell invaded his soli-

tude, he found Delmore, though more composed, sullen and indignant. Mansell carefully abstained from the most distant allusion to Miss Lascelles; and Delmore's swelling heart could not brook to resume a subject so galling to his pride, so mortifying to his consequence. Notwithstanding Mansell's vivacious sallies and sprightly observations, Lord Henry continued gloomy and absent; he was inattentive to his expressions of the amusement and delight he anticipated at the intended entertainment of the Marquis Alvari; and when his friend pointedly reminded him of their engagement, he declared that he meant to send an apology for his non-attendance. Mansell remonstrated with him on this violation of politeness, and the disappointment which the Marchesa would experience by his absence; and so successfully rallied him on his dejec-

tion and chagrin, that he awoke his slumbering pride, rekindled his disdain, and nerved his fortitude.

In the evening Lord Henry joined the brilliant circle at the Alvari Palace. Every man of fashion, talents, and consideration, at Naples, was invited by the Marquis Alvari to this magnificent banquet. The flashes of wit, the charms of converse, and the exhilarating influence of the bottle, could not excite his vivacity, or enable him to shake off the oppressive load that weighed upon his heart;—he was absent, reserved, and thoughtful;—regardless of the passing scene, and wholly absorbed in his own reflections. Delmore had unconsciously drunk a considerable quantity of wine, which, without enlivening his spirits, rendered him still more *distrait*, and abstracted from the festive board.

The party was now considerably re-

duced in numbers; when the Marquis Alvari proposed to adjourn to play; his recommendation was warmly supported by his friends, who were equally attached to gaming; and Delmore, indifferent and unconcerned, fatally accorded with their inclinations. As the Marquis's soul was passionately devoted to play, the company gamed high, and Lord Henry experienced some relief to his listlessness and dejection by the agreeable excitement of his energies. His passions, inflamed by wine, overpowered his reason; he staked considerable sums; he was unsuccessful;—maddened by his losses, stung by disappointment, and goaded by mental tortures, he desperately increased his risks; and, after a continued series of bad luck, Delmore retired from the Alvari Palace, with the loss of more than twenty-three thousand pounds.

CHAPTER IX.

When Delmore recovered from the stupifying influence of wine, and awoke to a full sense of the fatal error, into which the vehemence of his passions and imprudent excess had precipitated him, his mind was tortured by the most poignant self-reproaches.

The heavy loss which he had sustained, as it but slightly impaired his fortune, and occasioned no personal inconvenience or privation, was disregarded; but the character and pursuits of a gamester, so repugnant to

his principles and sentiments, impressed his imagination with such horror and detestation, that he strongly condemned himself for his easy compliance with the wishes of the Marquis Alvari. He reflected with sorrow and regret, that the money, which he had so lavishly squandered at the gaming-table, would have enabled him to patronize merit, to raise from obscurity, or relieve from undeserved oppression, the child of genius struggling with indigence and neglect,—to dispel the tear of anguish from the eye of the afflicted and desponding, and raise them to serenity and comfort. Agitated by considerations so distressing to his noble mind, he firmly determined never to play for any sums of magnitude.

The entrance of Mansell interrupted his reverie. Lord Henry was for the first time disconcerted and uneasy in his presence; he was debased in his

own opinion, and as Mansell, he conceived, entertained a similar abhorrence of gaming, he imagined that he must likewise be degraded in his estimation. He was little acquainted with the secret sentiments or practices of his friend. Mansell felt no such repugnance, he exulted in the occurrences of last night, and only wished that Delmore's losses had been more considerable; in a word, he had stipulated with the Marquis to be allowed a moiety of the sum which he might win from Lord Henry.

Mansell had zealously co-operated with the endeavours of the Marquis Alvari to engage Delmore at play: he was well convinced that a cool experienced gamester, would be successful when opposed to a young man inflamed by wine, distracted by passion, and unversed in the artifices and finesses of the gaming-table. The result

corresponded to his anticipations; and Mansell received an addition of eleven thousand pounds to his own fortune, by the disastrous losses of his friend. Mansell was however constrained to conceal the delight that gladdened his heart; he pretended to condole with Delmore on his ill-luck, and even attempted to dispel his chagrin and mortification by exciting his hopes that fortune might at another meeting be more auspicious.

Lord Henry quickly replied, that he was resolved never again to join in a pursuit so injurious to his character, so derogatory to his honour, and perhaps so ruinous to his prosperity.

"The disturbed and incoherent state of my mind," he observed, "occasioned by the duplicity of that capricious girl, who, I blush to declare even to you, my friend, still possesses too powerful an interest in my heart,

rendered me indifferent to my conduct, and can alone extenuate my momentary infatuation."

Mansell endeavoured to reconcile him to his imprudence, by adducing the example of persons of his own rank, who, though they devoted their nights to the gaming-table, were almost universally caressed and imitated; he encouraged him to court the favours of the blind goddess; and even pretended that he had a presentiment that success would crown the bold attempt. Delmore was little inclined to combat his arguments, and still less disposed to adopt his recommendation, he therefore permitted the conversation to terminate; and they separated, to fulfil their different engagements.

During two months Lord Henry strove to tear from his bosom, the image of that being who had received

ceived his early vows of love, in whom he had treasured up his sum of happiness, in the possession of whose affections he had anticipated the enjoyment of domestic comfort and never-fading delight. Often would he, as busy memory presented Maria Lascelles adorned in all the charms of youth and beauty, accuse himself of precipitancy and injustice; while his love-sick imagination magnified her perfections, and exaggerated her amiable qualities. Yet her cold neglect, her violation of her vows of eternal constancy and love, almost as soon as she had uttered them, the encouragement which she extended to Sir Harry Henley, and the indelicacy of her approaching union with that gentleman, after she had entered into so solemn an engagement to be only his, convinced him that the dignity of his character, demanded that he

should dismiss her as unworthy of his affection. Distracted and perplexed by contending passions, Delmore sought to heal the wounds of slighted love, by mixing in the voluptuous scenes of dissipation, or yielding to the syren blandishments of pleasure.

In this determination he was encouraged by the opinion and advice of his friend; the tumult of pleasures in which they now rioted, was congenial to the wishes and consonant to the inclinations of Mansell, and he almost regretted the necessity of relinquishing the luxurious entertainments and brilliant parties of the beautiful Marchesa. The potent talisman of ambition and interest, however, dissolved the fascinating spells of pleasure, and Mansell reluctantly determined to obey their dictates. He informed Lord Henry that, as his venerable uncle, whose estate he ex-

pected to inherit, was so dangerously indisposed, it would be necessary for him to depart instantaneously for England.

Delmore could not oppose a measure so essential to the interest of his friend : he was indeed secretly pleased, as he might now receive authentic intelligence concerning one whom he still cherished with the tenderest recollection.

Mansell promised to make immediate enquiries concerning his mistress, and to transmit him the most minute particular of her situation ; and after requesting Lord Henry to apologize to the Alvari family, and his numerous acquaintance, for his abrupt departure, he unwillingly quitted Naples.

CHAPTER X.

LORD HENRY was now almost domesticated at the Palace of Alvari; he was the inseparable attendant of the Marchesa; and whenever her friends wished to secure her presence at their crowded parties, they never failed to invite her favourite *cicisbeo*. Flattered by the marked preference which was manifested towards him by so fascinating a woman, and intoxicated by the seductions of pleasure, he momentarily forgot the lovely Maria; the Marchesa engrossed his attentions, and monopolized his regard; —

every thought and every faculty were devoted to the worship of this new idol. Dazzled by the alluring beauties of her person, and blinded by the captivating powers of her refined and cultivated intellect, he was unable to penetrate the secret sentiments of her heart.

His polished manners, enlarged mind, and the unbounded generosity of his disposition, combined with the graceful elegance of his person, had made a powerful impression on the susceptible heart of the Marchesa: she had gleaned from Mansell, that Lord Henry's expectations and prospects were most brilliant; and the enamoured Neapolitan, determined to leave a husband for whom she entertained an indifference bordering on disgust, that she might share the heart and fortune of so promising a young nobleman.

The Marchesa had vainly encouraged, or rather almost seduced Delmore to make an avowal of his affection; she was mortified and disappointed; he had certainly treated her with particular attention, and even displayed that gallantry, which a young man of fashion generally evinces to a fine woman; but as he considered the Marquis Alvari as his friend, he had never sullied his honour by an attempt to undermine the principles, or corrupt the virtue of his wife. This conduct surprised and piqued the Marchesa: her ardent temper could ill brook the procrastination, still less the disappointment of her favourite wishes: and as she was resolved to abandon her husband, she was eager to effect her triumph over the honourable principles, and to secure the affections of Delmore.

In the succeeding week, every per-

son of rank and fashion, in Naples, was assembled at the masked ball at the magnificent palace of Prince Meridi. Among the crowd of beautiful females who mingled in the sportive throng, the Marchesa Alvari shone pre-eminently conspicuous. The costume of a *Bacchante*, was admirably calculated to display the exquisite symmetry of her form; —her enchanting bosom outrivalling the driven snow, on which the loves delighted to dwell, was uncovered; — her polished arms, that outvied Parian marble in whiteness and smoothness, were bare; and her elegant dress, exactly fitted to her body, exposed, like "*woven wind*," every motion of the graceful wearer. Every eye followed her, enraptured, as she moved with dignity and grace through the mazy dance; whilst the elegance of her attitudes, and the matchless

charms of her person fascinated every beholder.

Amidst the numerous admirers who vied with each other in their attempts to please and flatter her, she appeared to be most gratified by the attentions of Delmore; and the lively Italians viewed with mingled envy and jealousy, the marked preference which their favourite toast manifested to the fortunate Englishman.

The Marchesa separated early from the motley groupe; Delmore handed her to her carriage; and as the Marquis was on a visit to a relation at Rome, she requested Lord Henry to attend her to the Alvari Palace. On their arrival at her stately mansion, she asked Delmore to indulge her with a private conference, as she wished to communicate an important secret which she had long painfully con-

cealed. A proposal so agreeable to his wishes, and so flattering to his hopes, was received with rapture, and obeyed with eagerness. He was surprised, on entering one of the apartments, to observe a table covered with a dessert composed of the most delicious fruits and finest wines, with every thing that could please the eye, or gratify the palate. The Marchesa pressed him to partake of this luxurious repast, and as Delmore was heated by his exertions in dancing, and his spirits elevated to the pitch of ecstacy, he incautiously drank a considerable quantity of wine. His glowing imagination, inflamed by the enlivening juice of Champagne, decorated the lovely object before his eyes with every grace and beauty; and his enamoured fancy prompted him now to adore as a goddess, her, whom he ever admired as a woman. Such was the

state of his feelings, and such the intoxicating delirium in which his senses were plunged, as he panted, with eager impatience, to learn the cause of so unexpected a request.

The Marchesa, with downcast eyes and a voice interrupted by frequent sighs, faulteringly observed, that she had risked his good opinion, and perhaps even forfeited his esteem, by adopting a conduct from which a scrupulous delicacy would shrink; but she had resolved on an unreserved disclosure of her secret thoughts, ra-rather than continue to nourish, in silence, sentiments which preyed on her peace, and consumed her heart.

Delmore passionately conjured her to wave ceremonious punctilio; and to consider that she was unfolding her secret uneasiness to a friend who esteemed her, who would sympathize in her sorrows, and even risk his

life to remove her grief, or promote her happiness.

Encouraged by the fervour of his protestations, she tremblingly declared, that she had married the Marquis Alvari, in compliance with the wishes of her family; —that she despised his character and abhorred his pursuits;—and that she loathed herself for abjectly consenting to a union, with a man whom her heart so strongly disapproved. She then delineated with an accurate pencil the darkest shades of her husband's character; and while she inveighed against his vices, and censured his opinions, she indirectly applauded the sentiments, and eulogized the conduct of Delmore.

"Alas!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands in agony, while a tear of tenderness glistened in her love-beaming eye, "there is but one person in

the world who can relieve me from my odious bondage, and restore my distracted mind to serenity and peace!"

Had Delmore been better acquainted with the movements of the female heart, or, rather, if his discernment had not been obscured by the fumes of wine, and the intoxication of his senses, he would have divined the person to whom the Marchesa so pointedly and pathetically alluded:— he would have known that, though the tongue be silent, the mind-illumined face can speak the inmost sentiments of the heart:

> " The secret thought which blushing love inspires,
> " The conscious eye can full as well explain."

Whether his ignorance of our sex's artifices, the obtuseness of his penetration, or that unconquerable diffidence which is the general concomitant of merit, induced him to over-

look himself, my reader must determine.

Delmore tenderly conjured the Marchesa to moderate her excessive sensibility, and disclose the secret sorrow that corroded her bosom: he pressed her to rely on his honour, and confide in his friendship.

The Marchesa raised her eyes, and casting a tender look at Delmore, attempted to speak, but the tumultuous throbbing of her heart, and her frequent sighs, arrested her utterance;—her bosom was agitated with the most violent palpitations;—her lovely neck was vermillioned with blushes;—she dissolved in tears, and sunk overpowered on the sofa. As Delmore supported her almost lifeless form in his arms, his eager eyes devoured her heavenly charms,— every nerve vibrated with joy and delight as he touched her yielding hand,—in an

ecstacy of pleasure he pressed her to his bosom, — and hurried by the excess of his passion, he bestowed innumerable caresses on his enchanting burden.

On reviving from her trance, the Marchesa turned her eyes, swimming with voluptuous languor, on the fascinated Delmore; the contagion of their glances infected his bosom, — the subtle poison ran through every vein, — virtue slumbered, —the most unbridled passions raged in his breast....

A violent noise and a loud knocking at the door aroused them to recollection; the Marchesa started from his arms, —the door opened, —his brother's Swiss valet, and a servant of the Marquis Alvari entered the room. The appearance of the confidential servant of the Marquis of Melrose, arrayed in the deepest mourning, checked the rising storm which was

ready to burst on the head of the unoffending servant. With the blunt honesty of an *Helvetian*, the man delivered to Lord Henry two letters; and before Delmore could burst the envelope, he was officiously informed of his mother's death. This unexpected and melancholy intelligence dispelled the magic powers of pleasure and the fascinations of beauty; he awoke to reflection and sorrow; and after entreating the Marchesa to excuse his perturbation, he precipitately retired from the Alvari Palace.

CHAPTER XI.

WE must now endeavour to disclose the motives, which induced Mansell to remove so quickly from Naples, and proceed to explain the circumstances that occasioned the unexpected and sudden appearance of the Marquis of Melrose's servant at the Alvari Palace, by whose arrival Delmore was preserved from guilt, sorrow, and regret.

Mansell had early discerned, that Lady Sarah Temple possessed considerable influence over the mind of Lord Henry's father, and that the

opinions and sentiments of his mother were greatly controlled and directed by her. He therefore assiduously laboured to cultivate her friendship and secure her interest; and as the union of her daughter with Lord Henry Delmore, was the principal object of her maternal ambition, Mansell had ingratiated himself with this aspiring lady, by assuring her that he had always exhorted his friend to gratify the prevailing wishes of his relatives, by a marriage with Miss Temple. By these agreeable protestations he flattered her pride, and secured her confidence; and the artful Mansell became her secret adviser and zealous co-adjutor. Mansell mentally exulted in the success of his insidious machinations;—he was pleased with the vehemence, with which Delmore's family urged this marriage; —and he privately stimulated the ea-

gerness of Lady Sarah Temple for this event, as Lord Henry had confidentially declared to him his determined resolution, never to unite himself with his cousin.

Delmore's attachment to Miss Lascelles was originally viewed with the greatest delight, and even encouraged by Mansell: he was pleased with the ardent love which Lord Henry entertained for her: — he was gratified by the knowledge, that Maria's bosom glowed with corresponding affection, as he imagined that the assiduities and allurements of an elegant young nobleman, would finally triumph over her principles and virtue. His ambitious hopes prompted him to aspire to the hand of Lady Georgina Delmore;—the present Marquis of Melrose had no family; and if Lord Henry had been seduced, by the pernicious influence of fashion-

able example, *to lead the life of honour* with Miss Lascelles, Mansell anticipated that his descendants would probably inherit the extensive estates of the House of Delmore.

From this delightful dream of future aggrandisement, he was aroused by the noble, exalted, and disinterested avowal of his friend, who passionately declared, that he should enjoy the highest condition of terrestrial felicity, if Providence would bless him with such a wife as Miss Lascelles. Mansell vainly attempted to rally Delmore out of this virtuous resolution, by ridiculing what he termed, so preposterous an alliance. Trembling with fear and disappointment, he immediately hastened to Lady Sarah Temple, to inform her of Lord Henry's recent declaration.

This communication spurred her impatience to consummate the mar-

riage of Delmore with her daughter; whilst the eagerness with which his mother pressed his union with Miss Temple, compelled him to escape from her unceasing expostulations, or rather persecution, by repairing to Italy.

Previous to his departure, Lord Henry had, with the greatest persuasion, prevailed on Miss Lascelles to receive his amorous epistles; and it was agreed, in consequence of the *kind* offer of Mansell, that he should address his letters to her under cover to Mrs. Mansell. The treacherous friend immediately disclosed this arrangement to Lady Sarah Temple.

My reader will doubtless anticipate the real cause of Delmore's disappointment, and perhaps censure the unjust reproaches, which he vented against the most lovely and injured of her sex, on account of her silence: female delicacy would not permit Ma-

ria Lascelles to commence an epistolary correspondence; she had indeed promised to answer his letters; but the tender and impassioned effusions which her adoring lover had breathed to the idol of his affections, instead of being delivered to his expecting mistress, were consigned, by the mother of his perfidious friend, to the scrutinizing investigation of Lady Sarah.

By Mansell's advice and recommendation, the paragraph containing the account of the duel, and of Sir Harry Henley's approaching nuptials with Miss Lascelles, was inserted in the news-paper. Exulting in the success of his subtle contrivances, Mansell endeavoured to confirm Delmore in his determination to banish Maria Lascelles from his heart; and, under the specious pretext of dissipating his melancholy reflections, he stimulated Lord Henry to indulge in every vo-

luptuous excess and luxurious gratification. Goaded by the stings of disappointed love, rankling with the festering corrosion of mortified pride, and perhaps flattered by the marked attentions, and gratified by the evident partiality of the Marchesa Alvari, Lord Henry had frequently avowed his intention of remaining in Italy.

Though Mansell was greatly elated by the conscious pleasure, that he had excited in Delmore's bosom the most violent emotions of contempt and hatred for Maria Lascelles; —though he hoped that the fascinations and allurements of the beautiful Marchesa, would completely extirpate every sentiment of affection for his much-injured mistress; — yet he dreaded that his long absence would expose Lady Georgina Delmore to the solicitations and addresses of a more opu-

lent and ennobled admirer: he therefore availed himself of his uncle's indisposition, as an imperative reason to enforce his immediate departure for England.

Mansell's arrival was hailed with joy and rapture by Lady Georgina: as he had now so firmly ingratiated himself with her mother and Lady Sarah Temple, he boldly avowed his passion; and the young member for ——, now exulted in the prospect of an approaching union with his titled mistress. The favourite object of his ambition was however withheld from his eager grasp by a melancholy and distressing catastrophe: — the Marchioness of Melrose had been severely indisposed by a cold and fever; in a violent fit of coughing she burst a blood-vessel; her feeble frame, de-

bilitated by sickness, and stupified by narcotic medicines, precluded exertion; the blood therefore regurgitated on the lungs and stomach, and occasioned instantaneous suffocation.

The Marquis of Melrose immediately transmitted an account of his mother's death to his brother; and as his Swiss Valet, Moderni, could speak the French and Italian languages, he was dispatched with the most positive injunctions to proceed with all possible expedition to Italy.

When Moderni entered Naples, he repaired to the hotel where Lord Henry Delmore resided; one of the footmen informed him, that his master had quitted the Masquerade with the Marchesa Alvari. Regardless of the numerous enquiries of Delmore's domestics, Moderni compelled one of the servants to accompany him to the

Alvari Palace; where he demanded to be instantaneously admitted to Lord Henry's presence.

The servants of the Marquis Alvari refused to interrupt his Lordship; but the honest Swiss, who was eager to communicate to Delmore an event by which he became possessed of the extensive estates of his grand-father the Duke of Belville, resolutely insisted on delivering his letters; and being rather inflamed by the liquor, which the extreme heat had induced him to drink during his journey, Moderni disregarded their opposition; and was proceeding to force himself into the room. Unable to check his impetuosity or to divert his intentions, the servants were constrained to disturb Lord Henry, and to admit Moderni.

The abrupt and unexpected appearance of Moderni, preserved Lord

Henry from the torturing retrospect of baseness and dishonour; and secured him from the stiletto of the assassin.

Delmore's retreat with the Marchesa from the masquerade, had not escaped the attentive observation of the Count Valvedi, who had long endeavoured to secure her esteem, and who, previous to Lord Henry's arrival at Naples, was generally considered as her most favoured admirer; — the jealous lover, maddened by disappointment and slighted affection, resolved to revenge himself on his successful rival. Foaming with rage and vengeance, the Count immediately retired from a scene of mirth and gaiety, that so ill accorded with his gloomy reflections: — by the distribution of a liberal reward, he engaged two bravoes to assassinate Delmore, as he returned from the Alvari Palace. As Lord

Henry was approaching his hotel, the Count pointed out his intended victim to the ruffians; — the two villains were silently and quietly advancing to their prey, when the sight of two pistols suspended in Moderni's belt, whose polished barrels reflected the trembling beams of the silvery moon, terrified them from the perpetration of their atrocious design;—and Delmore providentially escaped from the steel of the murderer.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Delmore entered his apartment, he attentively perused his brother's letter;—his heart sickened at the contents; he tenderly loved his mother; and her sudden and unexpected dissolution acutely wounded his affectionate heart. During his walk from the Alvari Palace to his hotel, he had overwhelmed his brother's servant by the number of his interrogatories; and the replies of the faithful fellow tended only to augment his sorrows. His agonized mind

was distracted by the most torturing reflections;—he upbraided himself for accelerating, as he thought, his mother's death by his undutiful non-compliance with her wishes;—and the recollection of his situation when he received these melancholy tidings, overpowered him with shame and mortification.

His body exhausted by tumultuous passions, inflamed by wine, and harassed by severe mental conflicts, could no longer sustain such violent exertions, but yielded to lassitude and fatigue. Delmore thrust the other letter unopened into his pocket, and retired to his chamber to court that repose which his agitated mind and languid frame so greatly required.

This letter which he now declined to examine, was from Mr. Charles Radcliffe; and, had he suspected that the contents even remotely related to

that angelic being, who first excited the flame of love in his glowing breast, neither the sorrows of filial affection, nor the distractions of contending passions would have extinguished his impatient curiosity, and eagerness to devour every syllable of his friend's epistle.

Radcliffe, after condoling with Lord Henry on the late melancholy and lamented event, stated that he had presumed on their long and unshaken friendship, to communicate some recent and unfortunate occurrences which involved his honour and character.—He continued to observe, that Miss Lascelles had been severely indisposed, that she still continued dejected and desponding;—and that he had very sound reasons to be assured, that her present unhappy situation originated from the violation of his engagements and the forfeiture of his

promises.—Charles Radcliffe then gave an animated and glowing description of the personal charms and mental perfections of Maria Lascelles; and his generous and manly feelings were powerfully displayed, in the pathetic picture which he delineated of her faded form and altered appearance. He concluded by remarking that she had been persecuted by the addresses of Sir Harry Henley, and another coxcomb, whose attentions and offers had served only to increase her melancholy and despondence.

During Lord Henry's absence from England, Radcliffe had passed most of his time with the Ossington family; and as Mrs. Lascelles' residence was so contiguous to Arley Grove, he frequently called at Mr. Arnold's cottage; and repeatedly met

her and her daughter at Melrose Castle.

Radcliffe's vivacity and unassuming behaviour, engaged the esteem of Mrs. Lascelles; and the zealous friendship and generous attachment, which he evinced for Delmore, forcibly recommended him to the good opinion of her daughter. He was a frequent attendant on the ladies; and they were never better pleased, than when their lively Rattle, as they termed him, accompanied them in their retired rambles.

The altered appearance visible in Miss Lascelles, was regarded with the deepest affliction by her tender mother and the generous Radcliffe. She at first evaded the anxious enquiries of her distracted parent, concerning the cause of her sorrow and dejection; but the affectionate solicitude

and tender concern which her mother manifested, invited and at length obtained her confidence: the blushing, trembling, half-reluctant maid confessed, that she had yielded her heart to Delmore, who had disregarded his solemn protestations of eternal fidelity, and cruelly devoted her to misery and despair. She informed her mother, that Lord Henry had promised to write to her; but that she had never heard from him since his departure from Melrose Castle.

Under other circumstances, Mrs. Lascelles would have censured her disobedience in engaging in a clandestine correspondence; but the present alarming situation of her daughter, only excited her compassion and regret; and she endeavoured to soothe her agitated spirits, and pour the balm of sympathy into the rankling wounds of slighted love.

One morning when Radcliffe had more than ordinarily expatiated on the superior intellect, the generous spirit, and benevolent affections of Delmore, Mrs. Lascelles, whose soul now sickened at this eulogy on a man, whom she considered as the assassin of her daughter's peace, and the destroyer of her happiness, could no longer command her feelings; but pointing to Maria Lascelles, as she retired through the door of the apartment, she desired him to behold, in that emaciated form and pallid countenance, a monument of the generosity and honour of his friend!

Bewildered by this unexpected attack, Radcliffe warmly pressed her to explain her mysterious meaning; when the wretched mother, with a heart bleeding with anguish and regret, disclosed to her astonished and sympathizing auditor, the distressing

circumstances which she had with such difficulty wrung from her unhappy daughter.

Radcliffe was perplexed, mortified, and disappointed;—he had ever considered Delmore, as possessed of every distinguished quality and liberal sentiment, that can adorn and elevate the human character; he knew him to be constant, kind, and benevolent, the very soul of honour and sensibility; — yet in this solitary instance his conduct apppeared capricious and unfeeling; — and was sullied by the most deliberate baseness, and almost unparalleled cruelty. — Though Radcliffe could not solve these mysterious and enigmatical proceedings, he was firmly convinced that some treachery or deceit had been practised on his noble unsuspecting friend.

He had long viewed the almost un-

controllable influence which Mansell seemed to possess over Lord Henry, with apprehension and regret; he knew him to be a hypocrite; and he suspected that his actions were directed more to the advancement of his own interests, than governed by honourable feelings or disinterested friendship. Radcliffe suspected his views on Lady Georgina Delmore; he was satisfied in his own mind, that Mansell had occasioned the breach between his friend and Miss Lascelles;—yet though he was convinced that a conduct so disgraceful, in his opinion, to Lord Henry had been induced by his artful devices and insidious suggestions, the liberal-minded youth could not conceive, that Mrs. Mansell, or her son, would descend to the degrading meanness of opening or suppressing a letter.

Determined, however, that Delmore

should be fully acquainted with these distressing circumstances, Radcliffe, with his native warmth of feeling, immediately transmitted him a faithful and pathetic account of Maria Lascelles.

After a night of restless agitation and feverish rumination, Delmore arose, and immediately proceeded to read the letter which, in the excess of his grief, he had thrown by neglected and unopened.

As he perused the afflicting recital, which Radcliffe had so feelingly given of the deplorable condition of his once-idolized Maria, his susceptible heart melted with the unmerited sufferings which the amiable girl had endured;—his former tenderness revived;—his eyes were fuffused with tears;—he arraigned himself for his precipitancy and want of confidence;—

and panted to throw himself at the feet of his lovely mistress, to obtain her pardon and secure a reconciliation. Yet still he was bewildered and perplexed: Radcliffe indeed represented, that the illness and dejection of Miss Lascelles had been occasioned by his inconstancy and neglect, but Delmore knew that he had repeatedly written, with all the tenderness and solicitude of an anxious lover, and that she had never noticed these testimonies of his affection: his friend also observed, that she regarded Sir Harry Henley with contempt and abhorrence; whilst the news-paper stated, as a matter of notoriety, that she was on the eve of being united to the baronet.

Delmore vainly endeavoured to reconcile these contradictions; but as his brother and friend so earnestly conjured him to return to England, he resolved to satisfy in person his

anxious doubts and tormenting suspicions.

As hostilities had recommenced between Great Britain and France, he was compelled to return to his own country by a circuitous route.—His eager impatience, however, could brook no delay;—and as his friend, the gallant and enterprising Sir S***** S****, (who is destined to increase his own fame, and exalt the honour of the British arms by his glorious achievements,) had occasion to dispatch a swift-sailing cutter to Falmouth, Lord Henry obtained permission from the intrepid Admiral to embark on board this vessel.

Distrustful of his own fortitude, and unable, in the present agitated and distracted state of his mind, to support an interview with the Marchesa Alvari, Delmore contented himself by merely addressing a few lines to her,

in which he acknowledged with thankfulness, her unbounded kindness and liberal hospitality, and concluded by declaring, that he would ever cherish with gratitude and delight, the recollection of the distinguished friendship, with which he had been honoured and gratified by so elegant and fascinating a woman.

Having dispatched this letter, (which he watered with his tears,) to the Alvari Palace; with dejected spirits and a wounded heart, he sailed from Naples.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE account of the death of that rigid, inflexible, and avaricious father, who had so long separated him from all his heart held most dear, had no sooner arrived, than Mr. Lascelles embarked for England, impatient to press to his affectionate bosom, a wife and daughter, who were more tenderly endeared to him by the cruel destiny, which had constrained him to tear himself from their beloved society. The heart of Mr. Lascelles bounded with joy and rapture, as he quitted the burning shores of Hindos-

tan, and anticipated with delight the ecstatic pleasure of a re-union with his family.

After a long and favourable voyage, the joyous crew felicitated themselves, that one short day would restore them to that country, which contained the objects of their unceasing solicitude and tender affection. Weak, short-sighted mortals! how often, while in imaginary security you hail the anticipated approach of bliss, does Providence mysteriously dash the cup of happiness from your lips, and convert your fancied joys to bitter disappointment and gloomy mourning!

These reflections were unhappily illustrated in the instance of the elated mariners, who, whilst their sanguine imaginations revelled in the near approach of expected felicity, were aroused from their dream of pleasure,

to the distracting horrors of anxiety and fear.

The calm of the preceding day had vanished; — the smiling face of heaven was obscured by dark and sulphureous clouds; — loud and tremendous peals of thunder alarmed the bravest sailors; — the incessant and vivid flashes of lightning appalled the senses; — the winds roared with unbridled violence; — the waves ran mountains high, one moment lifting the vessel on their foaming summits, and the next precipitating it into an abyss that seemed to open to engulph it. Unable to withstand the resistless power of the blast, and the overwhelming force of the surge which rolled with increased fury over the ship, the masts fell by the board, the rudder became useless, and the vessel, no longer obeying the helm, became ungovernable, — the sport of

the winds and waves. The sailors, instead of redoubling their exertions to preserve the ship, were mutinous and unruly; — desirous of calming the agitating terrors of impending death, they broke open the chests of liquor, and sought by the oblivious operation of inebriety to still the fears and banish the horrors of instantaneous annihilation.

The vessel continued to be driven at the mercy of the ruthless elements; when it was dashed with impetuous violence against a reef of rocks, the danger could no longer be concealed, every effort was now vainly exerted to remove her from her perilous situation; — by the increasing fury of the winds and waves, the ship was urged with resistless force against the rocks: —these repeated shocks shivered her timbers, and she sunk in the yawning abyss. The cracking of the tim-

bers, and the dreadful shrieks of the passengers, as the vessel was in the act of sinking, paralyzed the most intrepid seaman; every one on-board was occupied in schemes for his own preservation; some seized the floating hen-coops; others bestrode a buoyant plank; while numbers endeavoured to clamber along the steep and pointed rocks, from whence they might, when the violence of the tempest abated, swim to the shore.

Of the whole number on-board, Mr. Lascelles, together with three of the officers and twenty seamen, alone reached the shore; the greater part were buried with the vessel;—while others, exhausted by fatigue and benumbed by cold, could make no farther exertion, and sunk overpowered into a watery grave.

One of the seamen who were so providentially preserved, had fortu-

nately secured a small quantity of rum: this necessary cordial revived theri drooping spirits, and invigorated their toil-worn bodies. The storm had now subsided, the dark and pitchy clouds had disappeared, the sky was one entire canopy of purest azure, the rays of a summer sun burned with fervid vehemence, and by their glowing influence reanimated their torpid limbs. They could discern, at a short distance from the beach, the lowly huts of some fishermen, to whose humble habitations they immediately repaired; and by promises of a liberal reward, these rough strangers were prevailed on to shelter them in safety. The fishermen informed their guests, that they were now in Cornwall, about ten miles from Penzance. After recruiting their fainting spirits by some homely fare, the gentlemen resolved

to continue with their obscure hosts until the next day, when the sailors might be dispatched to Penzance to procure carriages to convey them to that town.

In the morning, the sailors, accompanied by one of the fishermen's sons, set out for Penzance. Whilst they were proceeding to that town, the officers and Mr. Lascelles agreed to dissipate the time until their return by rambling through the adjoining park. They strolled through the extensive grounds adorned with venerable oaks and majestic trees, until they arrived at a little gate, which opened into an enclosed shrubbery; the beauty of the walks and the odoriferous perfume of the flowers were a grateful enjoyment to persons, who had so recently been confined in a ship for several months; they passed through the wicket, and as they penetrated

through these enchanting walks shaded by a profusion of shrubs and small trees, they observed a young and lovely female, followed by a man of coarse and vulgar appearance; the countenance of the interesting girl was clouded by sorrow and dejection; the features of her attendant, as he regarded her, evinced the strongest marks of suspicion and cautious watchfulness.

The rustling of the leaves betrayed our wanderers; the alarmed attendant no sooner obtained a transient glance of the intruders, than he seized her arm, and ordering her to retire, he attempted to hurry her from the spot; —his sudden violence aroused her from her meditations, and as she beheld the gentlemen advancing, she shrieked, and passionately exclaimed, "Oh rescue me, rescue me, from my merciless persecutor!" The gallant

party rushed like lightning to her protection; whilst her terrified companion fled with precipitation and dismay.

Mr. Lascelles tenderly assured their alarmed *protegée*, that they would protect her at the peril of their lives; he then briefly informed her of their condition; and that they had been shipwrecked on this coast.

The trembling girl conjured them to secure her from the power of her tyrant, and restore her to her mother, from whom she had been inhumanly forced by some brutal ruffians.

The generous party simultaneously declared, that she might confide in their honour; and that they gloried in being the instruments of Providence, to rescue innocence and beauty from the savage gripe of tyranny and oppression.

Reassured by their ardent and solemn protestations of support, the timid maid moved with her protectors to the huts of the fishermen. The party was now re-inforced by the return of the sailors with the carriages. Their industrious hosts were liberally rewarded; and the generous seamen, exulting in having succoured virtuous beauty in distress, escorted their lovely prize in safety to Penzance.

The report of their expected arrival had collected an immense number of persons round the inn; their beautiful companion shrunk from the gaze of the multitude, whom eager curiosity had attracted to view those persons who had been so providentially preserved from destruction. The gentlemen sedulously endeavoured to calm her agitations and tranquillize her mind, by congratulating her on the

[illegible] being immediately re-[illegible] [illegible] arms of a doating mo-[illegible]

[illegible]le their fair companion retired to [illegible]t her scattered thoughts, and regain her wonted composure, Mr. Lascelles suggested to the officers, that she would probably be perplexed to communicate her wishes before so many persons, and that it would be more gratifying to female delicacy, for one of the party to adjust with her the mode of returning her in safety to her distracted parent. The gentlemen instantaneously assented to the propriety of his suggestion, and solicited Mr. Lascelles to undertake this grateful office.

When she re-entered the room, they retired. Mr. Lascelles prevailed on her to partake of some refreshment, and when she appeared to have recovered

in some degree from the alarm and perturbation, which she had so recently experienced, he entreated her to mention in what manner she wished the intelligence of her present situation to be communicated to her parent. As it had been agreed that the captain should travel with all possible expedition to town to apprize their respetive friends of their safety, Mr. Lascelles informed her of this arrangement.

The beautiful maid observed, that she would intrude on that gentleman to explain to her mother, the particulars of their extraordinary meeting by which she had been rescued from those wretches, who had so inhumanly forced her from the protection of a beloved parent. She then wrote a few lines in which she developed the circumstances of her being forcibly carried off by two men.

Mr. Lascelles requested her to give the most explicit direction to her mother's house. The lovely girl informed him that she had written a full description on the letter, intimating at the same time, that if her adored parent should have removed or be absent from home, if his friend would enquire for Mrs. Lascelles, at the Marquis of Melrose's, he would immediately be directed to her residence.

The name of Lascelles excited the most violent emotions in his bosom; he gazed with tenderness on his blooming companion; and impatient to satisfy his anxious doubts, he gently observed:

"When I inform you that, after an absence of many years, I am now returned from India, in the fond hope of again beholding a wife and daughter, whom I pant to press to a heart glowing with affection, and when you

know that I bear the name of Lascelles, you will excuse me if I presume to ask you a few questions. — Has your father been in India? — Is your mother an Italian?"

"My father," she replied, "has, alas! resided at Calcutta for several years; — my mother was born and educated in Italy."

"Look at that picture," (said Mr. Lascelles, drawing a miniature of his wife from his bosom,) "have you ever seen that countenance?"

Her eyes no sooner encountered the well-known features of her mother; than Maria Lascelles, after viewing Mr. Lascelles, with a look of mingled reverence and delight, suddenly arose from her chair, and throwing herself at his feet, exclaimed:

"You are, you are my father!"

Mr. Lascelles assisted his lovely daughter from the ground, and pres-

sing her with tenderness and ardour to his bosom, retraced with delight those features which so strongly resembled those of his adored wife. When their ecstatic raptures had subsided, Maria developed various interesting particulars, which convinced Mr. Lascelles, that he had been destined to *rescue* his angelic daughter from the power of a licentious profligate, and was now fated to restore her bright in innocence and loveliness to her distracted and wretched mother.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHILE Mr. Lascelles and his amiable daughter are participating those transports which so unexpected and blissful a meeting inspired, I will disclose to my reader the events which occasioned the removal of the interesting Maria, to this remote part of the kingdom.

Let us then revert to that period when the charming girl, yielding to the excess of sensibility, and wounded by Delmore's fancied inconstancy and neglect, pined and drooped;—and by her melancholy and dejection

excited fears in the bosom of her mother, lest the cruel stroke of disappointed love, should destroy the loveliest form that ever nature created. Lady Sarah Temple, having by the suppression of Lord Henry Delmore's letters, succeeded in exciting in the mind of Miss Lascelles, a decided conviction of his levity and perfidy, hoped also, by obtaining her esteem and securing her confidence, to convert the already outraged feelings of mortified pride and slighted love into hatred and contempt. — Actuated by these intentions, Lady Sarah, under the pretence that a change of air and the enlivening influence of amusing company, and varying diversions, would dispel the melancholy and renovate the health of Maria, persuaded her sister to invite Mrs. Lascelles and her daughter to pass the winter at her house in town.

Desirous of embracing any expedient which might have a tendency to arouse her daughter from the dejection and languor that now oppressed her; — Mrs. Lascelles readily and thankfully accepted the invitation of the Marchioness of Melrose.

The artful Lady Sarah exerted her utmost endeavours to dispel the gloomy reflections which clouded Maria's mind, and by hurrying her to every place of public amusement, and engaging her in a perpetual round of pleasure and dissipation, she hoped to banish the image of Delmore from her recollection.

Still her purpose could only be secured by the marriage of Miss Lascelles; while she continued single, her darling project was hourly in danger of being defeated; though she had by the basest deception succeeded in interrupting the harmony which

subsisted, and exciting dissentions between Delmore and his lovely mistress, she was convinced that if the mean imposture which had been practised on them should be discovered, a reconciliation would ensue, which would overwhelm her in disgrace and ignominy.

Propitious to her wishes, the charms of Miss Lascelles made a powerful impression on the heart of Sir Harry Henley, a young Baronet, possessed of an estate of fifteen thousand pounds per annum. Her new admirer urged his pretensions, and pursued his suit with that confidence which in this mercenary and corrupted age, the possession of wealth and rank too generally creates in a lover.

The ostentatious parade of opulence, and the glittering tinsel of a title, were, however, little calculated to captivate a mind consti-

tuted like that of Maria Lascelles; or to engage a heart still lacerated and bleeding with the wounds of a sincere and warmly cherished affection.

The numerous artifices and subtle contrivances,—such as the pretended quarrel at the Opera, and the sham duel between Sir Harry and his parasite Sparkle, which by the advice and co-operation of Lady Sarah Temple, were adopted to advance the Baronet in Miss Lascelles' good opinion, and to induce her to favour his pretensions, were too various, as well as too contemptible, to disgust my reader by a recapitulation.

Lady Sarah frequently remonstrated with Miss Lascelles, with all the pretended zeal of friendship, on the frigid indifference which she manifested to her lover; she attempted to demonstrate the advantages of an union with

Sir Harry Henley;—and even her mother endeavoured to persuade her daughter to accept so eligible and honourable an alliance.

Such was the situation of affairs when Mansell returned to England: in his first interview with Lady Sarah Temple, he exultingly gave her a minute description of the effect which the paragraph relating to the duel between Sir Harry Henley and Sparkle, produced on Delmore; and in the exact account which he gave of Lord Henry's conduct and situation, he *only omitted* to mention his loss at play, and his violent predilection for the Marchesa Alvari.—These artful coadjutors, who were so insidiously and unfeelingly plotting the destruction of the happiness of an innocent girl,—of an amiable relation and generous friend, resolved, that Sir Harry Henley should be encouraged, and

even occasionally deluded by assurances of success, to continue his addresses to Miss Lascelles.

The aweful and unexpected death of the Marchioness of Melrose, rendered it necessary to adopt a more prompt and decisive line of conduct; and forcibly evinced the danger of all procrastinating or temporizing measures.

The Marquis of Melrose in the pathetic account which he transmitted of this melancholy occurrence, had conjured his brother in the most pressing terms, to return immediately to England; and Mansell was too well acquainted with Delmore's fraternal affection, to indulge even a momentary hope that Lord Henry would refuse to comply with this request.

Mansell had so completely secured the esteem, and so entirely gained

the confidence of Sir Harry Henley, that the Baronet had frankly acknowledged to him, that his every hope of felicity depended on the possession of Miss Lascelles; and once unguardedly hinted, that he sometimes entertained the desperate resolution of carrying her off by force. Mansell eagerly availed himself of this unguarded confession, and warmly commended this determination; he observed, that young girls were sometimes so fantastical and affected, that they must be constrained, (as it were by gentle violence) to comply with their own wishes; and strongly protested, that Sir Harry might always rely on his zealous co-operation and friendly assistance.

A circumstance which was accidentally disclosed to the Baronet, operated as a spur to his sanguine impatience. Mrs. Lascelles had received

a letter from her husband, in which he informed her, that his father had bequeathed him an estate of eight thousand pounds per annum; in the elation of her heart, she communicated this grateful intelligence to Lady Sarah Temple, who entrusted it to her subtle confederate. Mansell instantaneously conveyed these joyous tidings to the enamoured Baronet, and endeavoured to stimulate his eager love by the powerful incitement, that his mistress was now the heiress to a splendid fortune.

Inflamed by the matchless charms of Miss Lascelles, and spurred to impetuous violence by Mansell's insidious observations, Sir Harry warmly protested, that he would re-urge every argument and arouse every feeling of pride and interest, to induce her to consent to his wishes: but if she rejected his offers and contemned his

love, he declared that he would, if Mansell would engage to assist him in the daring undertaking, convey her by force to his country-seat. Mansell readily assented to a proposal so congenial to his wishes.

To facilitate their plan, Lady Sarah Temple solicited Mrs. Lascelles to permit Maria to accompany her daughter and Lady Georgina Delmore for a few days to the Hermitage, a beautiful country-seat of the late Marchioness of Melrose, about twenty miles from town.—On the day after her arrival at this romantic spot, Miss Lascelles received a visit from Sir Harry Henley; and as he was an avowed suitor, and as his addresses were sanctioned by her mother, Miss Temple and Lady Georgina contrived that the lovers should enjoy a private interview. The Baronet expatiated on

the sincerity and ardour of his passion; — declared that his happiness depended on her alone; — endeavoured to dazzle her by his splendid offers; — and warmly pressed her to consent to bless his fervent love, with the possession of such excellence and beauty.

The timid maid acknowledged how highly she was flattered by his good opinion and esteem; but she hoped that he would not consider her as ungrateful for so unmerited a prepossession, if she observed, that she must decline the proffered honour of sharing his heart and fortune.

This candid and decisive avowal of her sentiments convinced him, that she would neither yield to his persuasions nor be moved by his entreaties; and after pathetically lamenting his evil destiny, and conjuring her to

compassionate the miseries of unsuccessful love; he reluctantly departed from the Hermitage.

On the following evening, as the western horizon was faintly tinged with the last rays of the setting sun, the young ladies were surprized by the appearance of a travelling-chaise, proceeding with terrifying celerity along the avenue which led to the house. A gentleman alighted from the carriage, and with breathless impatience and visible agitation enquired for Miss Lascelles, stating that he wished to deliver a letter to her on some important business. Alarmed by this unexpected and mysterious circumstance, the beauteous maid eagerly hurried to the room; when the stranger presented her with a letter; the astonished girl immediately tore open the envelope, and read the following afflicting intelligence:

"DEAR MARIA,

"I experience the most poignant concern and bitter regret, in being the unwilling instrument to convey the heart-rending tidings, that your excellent mother was this day suddenly attacked by a severe illness. You will therefore immediately accompany the bearer of this letter to town. Present my love to my daughter and Lady Georgina.

"I am, my dear girl,
"With unfeigned sorrow,
"Yours faithfully,
"SARAH TEMPLE."

The afflicted and agitated girl could with difficulty inform her young friends, of the dangerous situation of her idolized mother; — but hastily putting on her hat and pelisse, she proceeded with trembling steps to the carriage. On entering the vehicle,

she was surprized and even uneasy to perceive Sparkle, whom as the friend of Sir Harry Henley she despised; but her thoughts were too much absorbed in the contemplation of her mother's danger to be attentive to any other consideration.

They continued to travel with increased velocity, when Miss Lascelles, surprised at the time which had now elapsed, ventured to ask when they would reach town. Night had now drawn her ebon curtains over the face of heaven;—the horses had already been once changed:—another set was now put to the carriage; and as they still continued their career with impetuous celerity, Miss Lascelles insisted on being informed of the cause of this mysterious conduct; and declared that unless she received a satisfactory explanation, she would order the drivers to stop.

Finding disguise no longer practicable, Sparkle gently whispered, that they were conducting her to love and happiness, where joy and pleasure awaited her approach. Terrified by the most dreadful apprehensions, and aroused to all the horrors of her situation, the agitated maid distractedly screamed to the postillions to proceed no farther. Sparkle rudely stopped her outcries, whilst his companion, putting a pistol to her head, threatened her with instantaneous death if she made the least noise.

Desperate and frantic, she continued her journey, until overpowered by fatigue and anxiety, she arrived at the seat of Sir Harry Henley, at the extremity of Cornwall. Her companions conducted her to a commodious apartment; they informed her, that she had only to declare her wishes and they would, if possible, be gratified; that

she would be treated with tenderness and attention;—that she might freely range through the different rooms;—but if she attempted to escape, she would then be closely confined in a remote part of the castle. Agitated and distracted, she retired to her chamber, where nature, exhausted by such continued exertions, sunk to rest;—and the persecuted victim of interested villainy experienced a short oblivion of her cares and miseries.

She awoke to all the distracting horrors of her situation;—she pictured to herself the agonies of her wretched parent;—she reflected with melancholy tenderness on her still-beloved Delmore;—these thoughts would have tortured her to madness, if their gloomy terrors had not been enlivened by one cheering ray of consolation, that her mother's illness was

only an artful fabrication to delude her into the power of her tyrant.

During two days, her solitude was invaded only by the attendants who brought her provisions : — she repeatedly interrogated them concerning the situation of the castle, she entreated them to inform her to whom it belonged, but they were obstinately dumb to her questions.

What then were her surprise and terror at beholding Sir Harry Henley, who, throwing himself at her feet, affected to lament the violence of a passion, which had urged him to use this stratagem to accomplish his wishes ; he conjured her to pardon this outrage, which the excess of his love had hurried him to commit ; he renewed his protestations of eternal fidelity ; — and entreated her to rescue him from despair and wretched-

ness. During this address, Miss Lascelles regarded him with mingled horror and disgust ; — she desired him to evince his love by restoring her to her mother, from whom she had been so cruelly forced ; but finding him callous to her sufferings and deaf to her entreaties, she declared that she despised his baseness : — and that she would rather encounter death in its most hideous form, than debase herself by a union with such a monster of depravity.

The haughty Baronet, stung by her disdain, and indignant at her observation, replied, that he hoped reflections would induce her to change a determination so fatal to their future happiness ; he declared that he would allow her to deliberate for a week before she finally resolved ; and again conjuring her not to trifle

with his affection, he sullenly departed.

Left to her own reflections, she regretted, that she had inflamed his resentment by this unequivocal declaration of her sentiments;—she was sorry she had not dissembled her abhorrence, and endeavoured to soothe rather than irritate a man from whose power she could not hope to escape: she had however gone too far to recede; and she resolved to endure every misery, and submit to any extremity, rather than consent to a marriage with the profligate who had so brutally insulted her.

The appearance of Sir Harry Henley, however, convinced her that she had been basely trepanned by his artifices;—she concluded that the castle, in which she was now confined, belonged to that gentleman; and that

every effort would be exerted, and every mode of intimidation employed, to force her into a marriage with the Baronet.

Her busy thoughts distractedly roved to the consideration of her beloved mother's wretchedness;—then she contrasted the gentleness of Delmore with the haughtiness of Sir Harry; the horrors of a forced marriage then tortured her imagination; her harassed mind exhausted by her exertions could no longer animate her languid frame, and she sunk dejected and almost senseless on her couch.

After a night of sleepless rumination and feverish anxiety, the wretched maid arose, and, tempted by the calm serenity of the day, she roved, accompanied by a servant, through the beautiful shrubbery which surrounds the house, where that bene-

ficent Providence, who succours the virtuous in distress, sent a beloved and long-absent father to rescue his child from a marriage which her soul loathed and abhorred.

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER a separation so tediously protracted, Mr. Lascelles enjoyed the ecstatic bliss of again embracing a wife whom he idolized; and received augmented delight in gladdening the heart of his beloved consort, by restoring a daughter unpolluted to her maternal arms. The rapture of this meeting was sublimed by the retrospect of those circumstances, which had so strangely chequered his eventful life; while busy fancy presented to his enraptured view, the pleasing

prospect of domestic happiness and social joy.

Mr. Lascelles' career had indeed been marked by numerous vicissitudes of fortune, and the fickle goddess seemed to have selected him as an object, on whom she could exercise her utmost inconstancy and caprice. —— He was the younger son of Mr. Edward Lascelles, who held a lucrative employment under government. In his youth, he was much addicted to gaming; and indulged in every fashionable excess. His extravagance incensed his father; who refused to discharge his debts; and, as it was necessary to retrench, he retired to Italy.

The reputed fortune of his lady, whom he married at Naples, had inspired him with the hope of returning to England, and effecting a reconciliation with his father. The inter-

nal distractions of that unfortunate country, and the cupidity and baseness of his wife's relations, defeated his expectations; — and he trembled lest the discovery of his marriage, should still farther enrage his already-offended parent.

Accustomed, from his earliest infancy, to the refinements of fashionable life, Mr. Lascelles found his limited allowance insufficient to support the increased expence of a wife, who had been nurtured in every luxury and voluptuous indulgence.

About this time, Mrs. Lascelles, presented him with a daughter. During several years, he resided with his wife and child in the cheapest and most retired part of Switzerland; when he was rudely torn from the continued enjoyment of domestic happiness by the order of his father, who had obtained for him a lucrative situa-

tion at Bengal. To a friend on whose honour, zeal, and discretion he could confidently rely, Mr. Lascelles entrusted the important secret of his marriage; through whose kind intervention and assistance, his wife and daughter, whom he had brought to England, were concealed in a retired part of the country. His father's stern commands could not be disobeyed;—and Mr. Lascelles was compelled to separate, with a heart, bleeding with anguish and regret, from those beings whose endearing society constituted the greatest charm of his existence.

Mr. Lascelles had resided in India about five years;—when he received the intelligence of the premature and sudden death of his elder brother. This melancholy and unexpected event produced a fatal alteration in the health, and occasioned a violent

depression of the spirits, of old Lascelles; — he could not support the premature dissolution of his favourite son; and this severe disappointment of his long-cherished hopes, undermined and at length destroyed a constitution, already impaired and enervated by anxious cares and corroding sorrows.

On his father's decease, Mr. Lascelles was enabled to return to England, in possession of a splendid fortune, amply sufficient to extend the means of comfort and enjoyment to a beloved wife and amiable daughter; and to secure, after a life of perplexity and care, the soul-approving pleasures of domestic felicity.

The sister of Mr. Lascelles had been united to Lord Harefield, after the death of that nobleman's first wife; the resemblance of Maria Lascelles to the Dorville family, which

formerly occasioned so much uneasiness and doubt, was therefore neither surprising nor extraordinary. Lady Harefield insisted that her brother and his family should remove to her house, until a suitable residence could be procured; whilst every branch of this distinguished house endeavoured to manifest their satisfaction and delight in the acquisition of such relations.

On his arrival in town, Mr. Lascelles' attention was immediately directed to punish the author of the outrage and indignity offered to his daughter; but Sir Harry Henley, dreading the consequences of his resentment, and apprehensive of the disgrace that would attach to his name on the discovery of his infamy, had meanly retired to Lisbon.

Amid the delight and rapture which pervaded every inhabitant of Harefield House, the lovely Maria

was alone dejected and unhappy:—the only being, who possessed an interest in her heart, whose affection she prized, had, in her opinion, treated her cruelly and unjustly, while he himself betrayed the most contemptible levity and caprice. While every countenance beamed with pleasure, and every heart bounded with joy, her face was clouded with uneasiness and regret;—she was pensive and absent;—and she generally pleaded indisposition, as an excuse for retiring from scenes of mirth and festivity which so ill accorded with her wounded feelings.

Her parents saw and lamented her dejection; they knew the real cause;—the barbed shaft of unrequited love rankled in her heart; but they anxiously hoped, that time with lenient hand would assuage the anguish of the wound, and extract the dart.

Their expectations were happily destined to be speedily realized: Lord Henry Delmore had already arrived in England. Burning with love, and eager to be re-established in the good opinion of his lovely mistress, Delmore impatiently hastened to Charles Radcliffe, to whom he communicated the intelligence, that he had repeatedly written to Miss Lascelles. Radcliffe was astonished;—he suspected some treachery;—but this was not the moment to inflame Lord Henry's passions by developing his own suspicions. Delmore protested that his bosom glowed with the most ardent affection for his adored Maria;—that he panted to be reconciled to her;—and that he intended instantaneously to endeavour to obtain her pardon, and avow his unalterable passion at the feet of the idol of his heart.—With considerable difficulty Radcliffe per-

suaded him to postpone his intentions of visiting Miss Lascelles; — as in her present condition, the surprise of his sudden appearance might be attended with dangerous consequences to the object of his tenderest affections. Radcliffe promised to explain to Miss Lascelles the substance of their conversation, and Lord Henry consented to entrust the management of this affair to his friend's discretion.

With a heart elated by pleasure, and a mind elevated by joy, Radcliffe proceeded to Harefield House, where he immediately informed Miss Lascelles of the miscarriage of Delmore's letters, and assured her of his unalterable love and unceasing affection.— Radcliffe observed, with joy and satisfaction, the agreeable impression which this communication made on the susceptible bosom of Miss Las-

celles;—he urged his friend's suit with zeal and ardour; and, exulting in the grateful anticipation of re-uniting two fond hearts affectionately attached to each other, the generous youth departed from Harefield House.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE generous and unremitted exertions of Radcliffe were crowned with success;—and his friendly bosom glowed with the most pleasing emotions, when he perceived the delight and satisfaction, which his communications infused to the heart of Maria Lascelles.—The assurance and certainty, that the being who had inspired her with sentiments of the tenderest esteem, was still deserving of her love, and the decided conviction that he still cherished an ardent and unalterable affection, dispelled

the gloomy dejection which had so long overshadowed her animated countenance; every doubt of Delmore's constancy and fidelity was now vanished, while joyous hope and enlivening expectation chased away the *sombre* phantoms of melancholy and despair. By the co-operating assistance of the Dorville family, who greatly admired Lord Henry's qualities, Maria Lascelles was confirmed in her opinion;—and convinced of Delmore's honour and inviolable attachment, she joyfully consented to that reconciliation, which was so zealously promoted, and warmly encouraged by their mutual friends.

Delmore was now a constant visitor at Harefield House: restored to the good opinion of his lovely mistress, approved by her parents, and supported by her relations, he anticipated with ecstacy the rapturous pe-

riod, when his adored Maria would yield to the united wishes of their friends, and consent to bless his hopes, and consolidate his happiness.

One morning when Lord Henry and Mansell called at Harefield House, they were agreeably surprised by the officious communicativeness of a servant, who informed them that the Honourable Mr. Dorville was just returned from Italy. On entering the room, Lord Henry congratulated Mr. Dorville on his welcome arrival: Mansell with affected warmth and sincerity complimented him on his auspicious restoration to his family.

Dorville was highly gratified by their warm expressions of regard. Turning to a lady who was habited in a travelling-dress, and whose face was almost concealed by a deep veil, Dorville requested leave to introduce his friends; — the lady slightly re-

moved the envious shade which obscured her beauteous countenance; she beheld Mansell; — their eyes were instantaneously riveted on each other; — with violent gitation, and lips quivering with fear and horror, she exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven! — 'Tis he, 'tis Granville!" and sunk insensible into the arms of her brother.

But who can paint the horrors which palsied every faculty, and curdled the blood of Mansell, when he recognized the well known and much injured countenance of Miss Byron? The colour forsook his cheeks; — an ashy paleness overspread his face; — his haggard eyes were vacantly fixed; his trembling knees smote each other; — and he stood an emblem of mute terror and dumb despair. —

" Amaz'd he stood,
" Like ne astoun'd, nor fix'd his dubious
thoughts."

The unexpected, and, in his opinion, miraculous re-appearance of one who, he imagined, was mouldering in the silent grave, totally overpowered his courage; — he vainly attempted to resume his self-collection;—but unable to rally his fainting spirits, he hurried from the distressing scene, overwhelmed with consternation and horror.

By the soothing attentions and tender sympathy of her brother and friends, Charlotte Byron was sufficiently restored, to move with tottering steps to her chamber.

Mr. Byron had been so entirely absorbed by the deplorable condition of his sister, that he did not immediately notice Mansell's precipitate retreat;—resentment for her injuries now succeeded commiseration for her helpless situation; — and indignantly turning to Delmore, he furiously declared,

that he would hunt the villain, through the world until he made atonement for the wrongs which he had inflicted on his family.

Lord Henry replied, that Mr. Mansell would readily make any reparation for the supposed injury;—he however requested Mr. Byron to moderate his anger, and suspend his judgment, as, from the difference in the two names, he was convinced that his sister had mistaken his friend for a gentleman of the name of Granville.

The frankness and candour of Delmore in some degree appeased his indignation; and he consented to wave all farther observations on this business, until he was favoured with an interview with his Lordship on the following morning. Lord Henry undertook that Mansell should accompany him to the place of meeting; and immediately withdrew from the confu-

sion and alarm, into which the party had been thrown by Miss Byron.

My reader will recollect that Mansell, who had married Miss Byron under the assumed name of Granville, had cruelly and treacherously consigned the blooming Charlotte to the custody of a monster, who, for a stipulated reward, had agreed that she should pine away her life in perpetual solitude and obscurity. As this callous-hearted ruffian was journeying to his dreary residence with the lovely victim of a perjured villain, the carriage was arrested by a party of the banditti, who had long infested the neighbouring forest. The robbers proceeded to rifle them of their property; and imagining that Miss Byron, who was exquisitely beautiful, would be a grateful present to their commander, they dragged her, struggling and

screaming for assistance, to their cavern.

The youthful chief gazed on her charms with admiration and delight: he endeavoured to render himself amiable in her eyes by every delicate attention and soothing tenderness.—Alarmed at his conduct, Miss Byron frankly declared that she was another's wife;—with all the resistless powers of supplicating beauty in distress, she pathetically observed, that she had been recently married;—and with outstretched arms and streaming eyes she conjured him, if he hoped to avert the wrath of an avenging God, to restore her unblemished to her husband. The energies of nature were victorious: melted by her plaintive tale, the robber generously resolved to relinquish his beauteous prize; and immediately ordered some of his

men to give her safe conduct to Milan.

Miss Byron hastened on the wings of love and expectation to the Hotel, where she fondly hoped her anxious and almost distracted Granville would hail her return with tears of joy and gratitude. The perfidious Mansell had quitted Milan: and the landlord informed her that, shortly after she had left the hotel in company with the pretended country gentleman, Mr. Granville set out in his travelling-carriage.

Amazement for a moment seized on every faculty;—she remained irresolute and undetermined; when recollecting that her brother was at Milan, Miss Byron hurried to his residence. Her brother, though surprised at her extraordinary and unexpected appearance, welcomed her with the greatest cordiality and tenderness; and when she related the pathetic

circumstances of her confinement and release by the robber. His affectionate bosom melted with sympathy for the danger, and overflowed with rapture on the certainty of the safety, of an amiable and beloved sister. The disappearance of her husband, the contents of the anonymous letter which her base seducer had transmitted, and the intelligence which he received from his aunt, too fatally convinced young Byron, that his sister had been deluded and abandoned by a villain. The generous sailor commiserated her sufferings, and pitied her credulity; while his proud impatient spirit burned to meet the daring and unprincipled wretch who, under the sacred ceremony of marriage, had dared to contemn the laws of God, and the institutions of civilized society.

During his continuance at Milan, as Mr. Byron was returning one

night to his hotel, he heard the clashing of swords, and by the faint glimmering of the moon, he observed a gentleman, leaning against the wall, who was endeavouring to defend himself from the furious attacks of two assailants. The gallant sailor sprung to his relief;—and the two bravoes, terrified at his approach, precipitately fled. Mr. Dorville (the gentleman whom he had so providentially rescued from their murderous attempts) was wounded in the arm: Mr. Byron applied his handkerchief to staunch the blood, and supported the fainting man to his apartments.

During a dangerous and tedious illness, Dorville experienced the unceasing solicitude, and tender anxiety of the brave man, who had before preserved his life from the swords of the assassins. In the society and attentions of young Byron, and his

engaging sister, Dorville enjoyed that amusing converse and unreserved intercourse of soul, which operate so powerfully and effectually to dispel the languor of indisposition, and constitute perhaps the greatest charm of rational existence. Regard for the preserver of his life was heightened into the sincerest friendship for the intrepid and generous Byron; and Dorville resolved to manifest his gratitude, by advancing his future fortunes, and by exerting his influence to promote him in his profession. By Dorville's earnest entreaties Mr. Byron and his sister accompanied him to England; and Lord Harefield had already, as a token of gratitude for the preservation of his son, obtained for the young sailor the rank of Post-Captain.

CHAPTER XVII.

When Mansell returned with an aching heart and disordered steps from Harefield House, he retired to his chamber, to avoid the presence of the Delmore family. Disgraced, mortified, and humiliated, he loathed himself; and hated the face of the whole human race.

At first, he paced the room in gloomy sullenness and melancholy meditation, brooding over the fatal consequences that would probably attend this disastrous disclosure, and devising the means to avert the bursting

storm which menaced the eternal destruction of his ambitious hopes and favourite projects. He contemplated himself as the bosom-friend of Lord Henry Delmore; — the destined husband of his sister; — possessed of wealth, power, and consideration; — all that could soothe his pride, or gratify his ambition: with horror and dismay he viewed himself hurled from the proud eminence of aspiring hope, and driven with disgrace and infamy from his native country.

These contrasted considerations distracted and tortured his imagination; and the mortifying conviction, that he had been deceived and outwitted by a base-born villain, who had lulled him into fancied security by the assurance of Miss Byron's death, still more inflamed his frenzied mind, and goaded him to desperation and madness; —

"As when the seas expect a gathering storm,
"The ocean blackens, and the silent waves
"Sleep on the bosom of the gloomy deep,
"Hush'd in a peace profound; till from the clouds
"The furious storm impetuous bursts its way,
"Buffets the hoary main, and shoves the waves
"Before its fury to the frighten'd shores."

Maddened by these tormenting reflections, he desperately grasped his pistol, and applied it to his head; but his trembling hand and coward heart prevented the performance of that dreadful act, from which a sense of religion, or dread of offending an insulted Deity would not have deterred him. He dropped the weapon from his grasp; irresolute and vacillating, one moment he almost resolved to avow his errors, and implore the forgiveness of Delmore; — the next, he determined to manifest his contrition, and propose to make some atonement by marriage, for the cruel injustice

and his perfidy which he had evinced to Miss Byron.

But these determinations were momentary and evanescent;—mortified pride and the bitter disappointment of his towering hopes speedily banished the fleeting suggestions of remorse. His mind, haunted by the appalling phantoms of a guilty imagination, fancied that Lady Sarah Temple, on perceiving the certainty of Delmore's marriage with Miss Lascelles, might unmask him to that abused friend;—he dreaded lest his valet, to whose brother he paid an annuity as a reward for the confinement of Miss Byron, should disclose his villainy; and he trembled with the fearful apprehension, that Sir Harry Henley would develope the co-operation and assistance, which he had afforded in the late outrage on Maria.

In agony and bitterness of soul he

execrated his inauspicious fortune; and muttering curses, and denouncing vengeance on the wretch who had abused his confidence, he hurried with desperate steps and distracted mind from Delmore House;—resolved to bury his disgrace and crimes in the oblivious seclusion of a foreign land.

Thus was Mansell, whose whole life was a continued endeavour, by subtlety, hypocrisy, and insinuating address, to engage the esteem, and secure the confidence and influence of the opulent and powerful, precipitated from the proud acclivity of opening greatness, and driven with ignominy to contempt, despair, and banishment.

His merited disgrace and humiliation should serve as a beacon to warn mankind, that inevitable ruin and

destruction will await the man who forsakes the broad and obvious road of honour and integrity, to tread the intricate and tortuous paths of insincerity and dissimulation.

"Sincerity!
"Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
"Thy onward path! altho' the earth should gape,
"And from the gulph of hell destruction cry,
"To take dissimulation's winding way."

Even Mansell, a man of the most splendid talents and extensive acquirements, with every requisite to plan with accuracy and discrimination, and to execute with vigour and promptness, was disgraced by a low-born hind, whose selfish and interested views induced him to deceive his employer, by a pretended account of the dreadful death of that woman, whom he had so basely deluded and so inhumanly abandoned;

who was reserved to complete the retributive justice of Providence, and avenge the injuries which an unprincipled contemner of the laws of GOD and social order had so brutally inflicted.

Had Mansell pursued the career of probity and honour, how different would have been his condition; how enviable would have been his lot! Allied to a noble and distinguished family;—possessed of all the luxuries and refinements of social life;—esteemed by persons of the highest character and consideration in the country;—happy in a firm and long-cemented friendship with a nobleman of the greatest talents, of the most eminent virtue, and the warmest affections;—elevated to a seat in the senate, he would probably have shared in the councils, and participated the favour of his sovereign. The dreadful reverse must powerfully afflict

every virtuous and ingenuous mind; and his disastrous fate should operate as a warning, and present an eternal monument to deter mankind from the destructive and fallacious hope of securing their own aggrandisement, by the illusive and uncertain means of perfidy and dissimulation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The discovery of Mansell's perfidy and baseness, rudely interrupted the general felicity which pervaded, and partially obscured the pleasing prospects which were presented to, the Delmore and Dorville families.

Lord Henry experienced that mortification and regret, which a liberal and exalted mind will ever feel, in contemplating the possessor of splendid talents, extensive acquirements, and great personal accomplishments, prostituting such advantages, and de-

basing the purest and best gifts of Heaven to vile and ignoble purposes. His friendship for Mansell had been ardent and sincere; — the welfare and aggrandisement of his friend were the favourite objects of Delmore's exertions; while the man who had, by hypocrisy and dissimulation, obtained his esteem, and enjoyed his unbounded confidence, was secretly and constantly endeavouring with viperous fangs to wound the generous, unsuspecting bosom that cherished him. The recollection of Mansell's duplicity, meanness, and inhumanity, extinguished every remaining sentiment of friendship or regard; and Lord Henry resolved to dismiss him from his heart, and consign him to pine in exile and solitude, a prey to the corroding reflections of disappointed ambition and detected guilt.

His unhappy sister however could

not banish from her bosom, the man to whom she had surrendered her virgin affections; whom she had ever regarded with the sincerest and tenderest esteem, and to whom she expected, in the face of Heaven, to be indissolubly and eternally united. Even the knowledge of his unworthiness could not erase his fondly preserved image from her heart;—she, still cherished his memory with tender sorrow;—and when her thoughts wandered to this fatal subject, Lady Georgina was pensive and dejected. The entreaties and persuasions of her family were repeatedly but ineffectually employed to induce her to violate her vows of affection by an alliance with another; —and the constant maid continued to cherish the secret sorrow which consumed her.

The grief and sufferings of his sister transiently obscured the joy, and

faintly dimmed the fervid sun of happiness, which beamed on the enraptured Delmore. His lovely mistress, convinced of his fidelity and unalterable affection, had yielded to the advice of her parents and the persuasions of Delmore, and consented to bless the wishes and crown the felicity of her adoring lover.

The charms and accomplishments of Miss Harriet Dorville, had excited an ardent affection in the bosom of Charles Radcliffe ; — and the amiable girl experienced sensations of equal tenderness for the generous youth.

On the same day that united Lord Henry Delmore and the lovely Maria in the bands of *Hymen*, the hands of Charles Radcliffe and Harriet Dorville were joined at Melrose Castle, in the presence of an approving and delighted family, accompanied by the benedic-

tions of the benevolent and enraptured Major Belford.

Melrose Castle had been, for several days preceding their nuptials, the abode of festivity and joy; every countenance beamed with satisfaction, and every heart bounded with pleasure;—Lady Georgina's pensiveness disappeared in contemplating the happiness of her favourite brother; and even Lady Dashall, (who had been compelled to seek a refuge with her indulgent father,) forgot her misfortunes and the desertion and infidelity of her husband; and her features relaxed into smiles and good humour on her cousin's propitious marriage.

The fiery particles of impetuous youth had now exploded;—the tumult of the passions no longer raged;—the occasional aberrations of juvenile indiscretions had ceased;—and Lord

Henry's enlightened mind, brilliant talents, and extensive knowledge were devoted to the performance of those great and important duties, which his dignified station and exalted rank required.

Blessed with an amiable and beautiful wife who uniformly endeavoured to render the enjoyment of domestic pleasures the most delightful relaxation from his parliamentary exertions; — revered by a numerous tenantry; — courted and caressed by an extensive circle of political friends; — idolized by the people, and respected by his sovereign; — Delmore united social happiness, with all that could gratify a generous ambition which seeks to advance the prosperity, and consolidate the liberties of his country.

FINIS.

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